

# *Baptism*

*Its Doctrine and Mode*



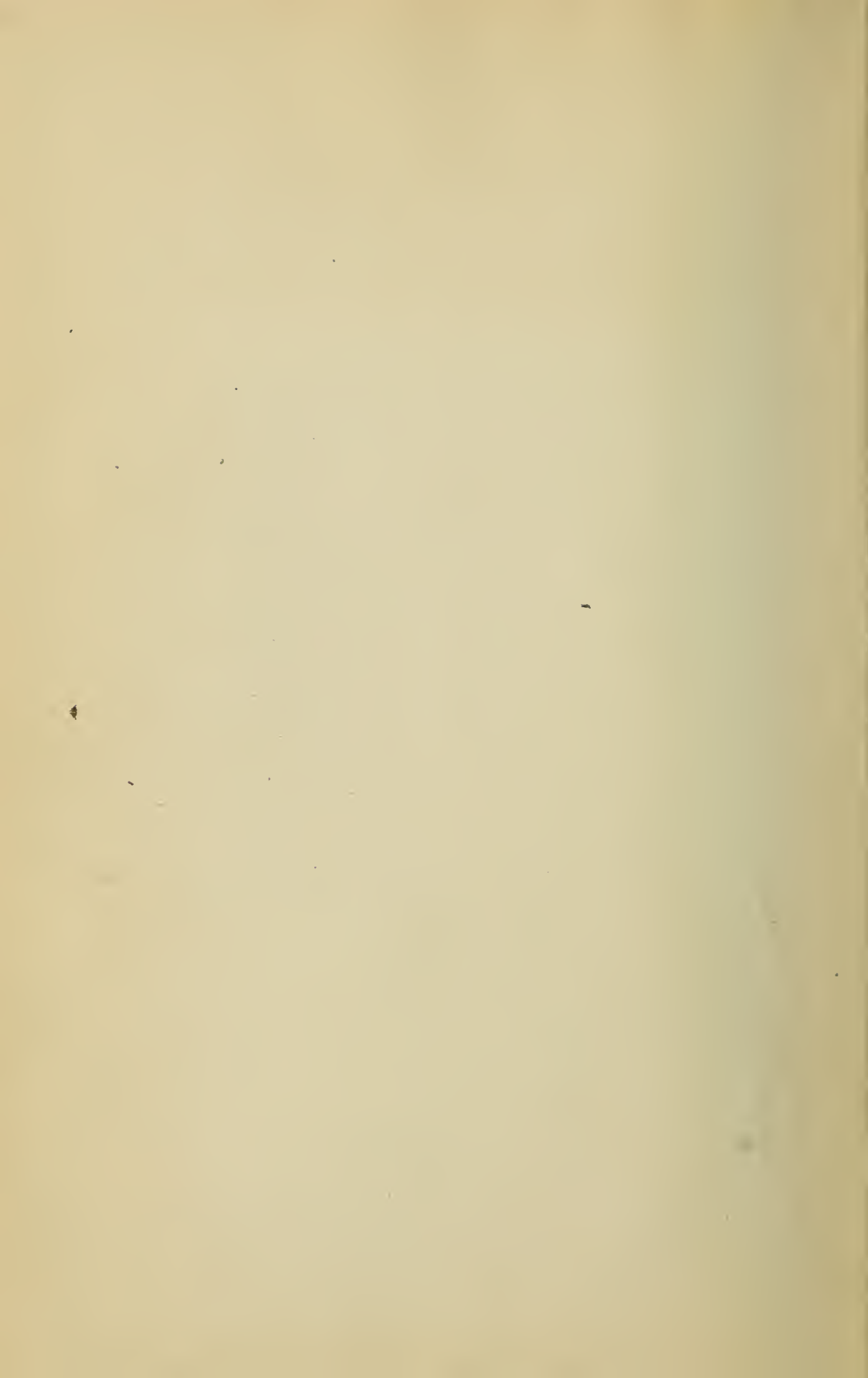
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# BAPTISM,

## ITS DOCTRINE AND MODE

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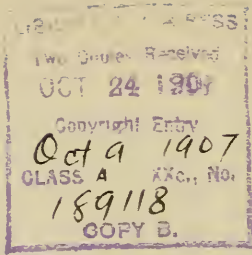
IN A CONVERSATION BETWEEN A BAPTIST  
AND A PRESBYTERIAN.

BY  
REV. JAMES THOMAS SAILES.



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TO ALL SEEKERS AFTER TRUTH  
ON THE SUBJECT OF BAPTISM  
THIS WORK IS DEDICATED  
BY THE AUTHOR.





## PREFACE.

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DURING a ministry of nearly thirty years, spent in Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas, and principally in evangelistic work, I have had many opportunities of listening to disputations on the subject of baptism. In country and village Baptist Churches it has furnished the theme for almost every sermon for years; and the more ignorant the minister and people, the more frequently has the subject been discussed. Indeed, it has happened, not infrequently, that children at the common schools have made this subject the cause of battles royal on the play-ground during recess.

The frequent discussion of the subject by immersers has had its effect upon the minds of the people, who were compelled to listen, if they went to preaching at all, to the extent that those who were not well-grounded on the doctrine of sprinkling or pouring, had their views so changed, or so modified, as to give rise to a feeling of indifference on the subject. So liberal have many Pedo-baptists become, that they allow that it is a matter of but little consequence *how* the sacrament is administered, provided the thing be called baptism.

It has often been thrown in the face of Presbyterian young people, that their ministers do not preach on baptism, because they have no Scriptural grounds on which to stand; and at the close of a Baptist protracted meeting, not long ago, the minister told his congregation that "it was universally conceded by all *intelligent* people that immersion, and immersion alone, is Bible baptism."

Now, if Presbyterian and other Pedobaptist ministers undertook to refute these and all the other false statements and charges made by immersers, their whole time would be consumed in the undertaking. I think it may be truthfully said of Presbyterian and other ministers who believe in sprinkling or pouring, that they are more concerned about obeying the injunction—"live peaceably with all men"—than they are about their Scriptural grounds on baptism. They feel so sure of these that they do not think it necessary to constantly show them up.

A few years ago I was called to the pastorate of a church in a town of some six or seven thousand inhabitants, and in which were organizations of almost all denominations under the sun. Several of my officers and members had married ladies belonging to other denominations, principally Baptists and Campbellites. These intermarriages had given rise to luke-warmness and lack of loyalty to the Presbyterian Church and its doctrines; and it not infrequently happened that members of my Church would pass their own house of worship on their way to others, where the service was more ornate, or cyclonic. I was much troubled over the existing state of affairs, especially on the views of many of my people on the subject of baptism. I conceived it to be my duty to instruct them on this subject, but was afraid if I did it on the Sabbath days—so much was needed to be done—it might become monotonous and fail to accomplish my object. I therefore concluded to deliver a course of lectures on the subject of baptism at prayer-meeting, and so announced to my congregation. I found the plan adopted a good one. The services were well attended, and the results most gratifying. Several Campbellites and Baptists united with my Church, and thus was introduced into families harmony, where religious discord had previously existed.

I had, in my library, several works on the subject of baptism, into which I had looked before preparing my lectures, but the manner in which they treated the subject did not satisfy my mind, nor was it adapted to the mind of those who would hear me. They were too dry and too learned for the people I expected to address, and hence I laid them back again to their repose. I thought within myself, if baptism is a sacrament instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, and was ordered to be continued in the Church, the Word of God itself should be the guide to its form and administration, and should be clear enough to enable us to avoid mistakes in reference to it, without perplexing the mind by explanations and derivations from the Greek or Hebrew; something with which the people were unfamiliar. And as our common English translation was as near perfection as our knowledge of the ancient languages in which the Scriptures were originally written would admit, the common English Bible should be the only guide to direct us in the administration of this holy ordinance. To the English Bible, then, I directed my attention, and I determined, at the very beginning, that should I learn from it that immersion was the mode of baptism taught therein, I would forsake the Church of my inheritance and affection, and sever the family ties and traditions of the generations of my forefathers, and seek membership in a Church that practiced the Bible mode of baptism. I believe I went to the study of the Word with a mind as open to conviction, and as free from prejudice and the influences of early education as it is possible for a man to do and to have.

This little volume contains the result of my investigation of God's Word, in as clear and concise a form as was possible in the time at my command and for the object in view. No doubt it has its faults, faults, too,

that I might remedy if I were to write again. It may be too elaborate here and there and not elaborate enough in other places. But it is too late now to remedy these defects.

Recent statements of immersers, and the effects of these statements upon those who ought to be Pedobaptists, led to its publication. I have put it into the form of a dialogue between a Presbyterian and a Baptist to make it interesting and instructive to young people, and have avoided almost all reference to the original languages of Scripture. I have put into the mouth of Robert, the Baptist, the strongest arguments I have ever heard used by immersers, if not more and better than they generally use. If I succeed in furnishing young people with good, because biblical, reason, for sprinkling or pouring, and induce them to study the Bible for themselves, and help them to understand God's Word on this important subject, my object shall have been accomplished, and I shall feel amply repaid for the time and thought given to it. With this in view, I send it forth into the Church and into the world, praying God's blessing upon it. I believe that, as a common sense view of Christian baptism, it will supply a long-felt want in the Church.

J. T. SAILES.

# BAPTISM:

## ITS DOCTRINE AND MODE.

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A DIALOGUE between Robert and James on the subject of baptism. Robert is a member of the Baptist Church, and James of the Presbyterian, and both are honest and pious men, and warm, personal friends; and each, of course, thinks the *mode* of baptism practiced in his Church the right and scriptural one. They have frequently conversed with each other on the subject of religion, and have been mutually benefitted by their heart-to-heart talks.

On one occasion, however, their conversation took a more definite form than usual. Robert, apparently full of the subject, approached James with eyes sparkling and countenance all aglow with enthusiasm, and said:

“Brother James, I would be so glad if you would join the Church. I believe your heart is right; now, if we could just get your head right, all would be right.”

JAMES.—What do you mean, Brother Robert, by saying you “would be so glad if I would join the Church?” You certainly know that I have been a member of the Church for many years.

ROBERT.—Friend James, I believe you are a Christian, and I know you to be an intelligent and conscientious man, and therefore I speak to you with a good deal of diffidence. My respect and friendship for you have often led me to the point of speaking with you on this important subject; but I have refrained until now. I feel, how-



ever, that I would be doing myself a wrong if I repress the impulses of my heart any longer. I believe it is needed only to call your attention to the Bible mode of Christian baptism, and your intelligent discernment of gospel teaching will convince you at once, that you have never yet been baptized, and consequently not yet a member of the Church.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I believe you to be thoroughly honest in your intentions and convictions, and therefore take no offence at your language. But I must say that, had I less confidence in your piety, or doubted the kindness of your intentions, your language would be an insult to my moral honesty and intelligence. But I believe you do not mean to offend, and therefore take no offence, and would be glad if you would instruct me out of the Bible upon those points on which you consider my knowledge deficient. It would please me very much to have your guidance and assistance in the investigation of the Scriptures on the subject of baptism, and if you can come up to my home after business, say to-morrow night, I will find a quiet spot where we can read and study the Bible together, and try to find out whether the Bible teaches a mode of baptism, or whether a mode can be logically deduced from it. And even should we fail to discover a *mode* of baptism, our study of the Word will do us good.

ROBERT.—Very well, Brother James, I will be glad to go to your house to-morrow after business hours to study the Bible with you on the subject of baptism, and I feel assured you will soon see that immersion is the Bible mode, and, consequently, that nothing else is, or can be, Christian baptism but immersion.

On the following evening, as agreed upon, Robert went to James' house, and both retired to the library, where,

without interruption, they could enter upon an investigation of the Scriptures on the subject of baptism. Evidently Robert was much pleased, as a smile was upon his countenance as he remarked to his friend:

ROBERT.—Brother James, I am so glad you have consented to study the subject of baptism with me, for I feel confident you will soon be convinced that you have never been baptized.

JAMES.—Well, my brother, I wish to be right on all matters of religion, and if I am wrong on the Sacrament of baptism, I shall feel very grateful to you for setting me right. Indeed, I have never given the subject much thought—I have taken it for granted that the great Presbyterian Church was as nearly right in all its forms and doctrines as any Church could be. You know that my Church is proverbial for an educated ministry; and when *its* thousands of ministers, and thousands of thoroughly educated ministers of other denominations with them, practice sprinkling or pouring as Christian baptism, I had no other thought than that these intellectual and consecrated men practice what the Bible taught on the subject.

ROBERT.—I must say, Brother James, that your conclusion as to the rightness of sprinkling or pouring, under the circumstances, was but natural. Your case but proves how easy it is for an intelligent Christian man to believe a thing to be right, which the Bible teaches to be wrong.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, your zeal on the subject of immersion leads you to forget that respect for the honesty of others, which usually distinguishes you from a large majority of your brethren. You certainly perceive that your statement charges the thousands of Presbyterian and other ministers who practice sprinkling or pouring with dishonesty; for it certainly is dishonest, if nothing

worse, to practice and to teach a thing which, you say, is contrary to the Word of God, and which, according to your view of the matter, is so *plainly* in disagreement therewith.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I must confess that I *am* zealous on the subject of baptism; but I do not wish to be disrespectful to those who differ from me. I do not charge *your* ministers and others with dishonesty, but I think they have fallen into the mistake just as you have done. They have been reared up in Churches which practiced sprinkling, and, like you, have never given the subject any thought for themselves.

JAMES.—Well, Brother Robert, your explanation is about as complimentary to these ministers as your implied charge of dishonesty. But we will let all that pass, for I believe you do not mean to cast reflections upon either their piety, intelligence or moral honesty. So now to the business before us. As you and your Church attach a great deal of importance to this subject, and as I believe it worthy of very serious consideration, as all ordinances of the Lord's appointment are, I suggest that we go into this investigation, not only prayerfully, but, that we lay aside for the time being, if we can, all preconceived opinions and the influences of previous instruction, and enter upon the investigation of God's Word with minds as free from prejudice as possible. Let us try for ourselves if we can discover what the Scriptures do actually teach on this subject of baptism.

ROBERT.—Well, Brother James, your proposition is a fair one, and I agree to it willingly.

JAMES.—Very well, then, let us clearly understand each other at the very beginning, so that all misapprehension as to the meaning of terms may be avoided; and in order to this I ask you how many sacraments you recognize



as having been instituted by our Lord and Saviour in the Christian Church?

ROBERT.—Why, two, of course—Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

JAMES.—Very well, Brother Robert, we agree in this, that there are but two sacraments in the Christian Church. Now, I would like to know what your opinion is as to the object of a sacrament? Why was it instituted?

ROBERT.—Our Lord's command in reference to the Supper is: "Do this in remembrance of me; do this till I come again," and the emblems, or the bread and wine, represent his broken body and shed blood. And the Apostle Paul tells us in 1st Cor. xi. 26, that, as often as we observe the Supper, "we do show the Lord's death till he come." So that, I take it, a sacrament was instituted to *represent* something, and to keep that thing before our mind.

JAMES.—Very well, then, Brother Robert, if I understand you, the breaking of the bread and the pouring of the wine, in the Lord's Supper, represent the bruising of the body and the shedding of the blood of our Saviour upon the cross for sin?

ROBERT.—You understand me correctly in this. That is what I think the Lord's Supper was intended to represent.

JAMES.—Well, Brother Robert, what was the other sacrament—baptism—intended to represent? I think a sacrament, in the very nature of the case, represents something. In the Old Testament, or Jewish Church, the Sacrament of the Passover commemorated and represented the passing over of the houses whose door-posts were sprinkled with the blood, by the destroying angel; and the Sacrament of Circumcision represented the cleansing of the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, as the Apostle Paul clearly teaches in Romans ii. 28, 29.

ROBERT.—The Sacrament of Baptism represents the *burial* and *resurrection* of our Lord. But, Brother James, I think you are very much mistaken when you speak of the Passover and Circumcision as sacraments. Sacraments are divine ordinances in the Church, and you know there was no Church until Christ came and set it up.

JAMES.—Why, Brother Robert, I am astonished to hear you say there was no Church until our Saviour came and set it up. Was God and the world without a Church for upwards of four thousand years? But, perhaps, we differ in our views as to what a Church is—as to what constitutes a Church. What is your idea of a Church?

ROBERT.—Oh a Church is a number of men and women who profess faith in Jesus Christ, and who have been baptized by immersion. But, indeed, I have not thought much about the matter.

JAMES.—But, Brother Robert, this matter of a Church, to which, it seems, you have given but little thought, I regard as being very important. Surely to know something of those parties who, in every age previous to the coming of Christ, bore witness to God, should be a matter of great interest to those of the present day who bear witness to the same God. There can be no difference in the sight of God between those who worshipped him *before* Christ came and those who worship him now. If, in his mercy, he has made provision for his people to-day for their growth in grace and knowledge, one would expect that he had made like provision for his people in all ages. Anything else would not be like God. Hence he must have had a Church previous to the appearance of our Lord in the flesh. To my mind, the Church of God consists of all those who, in every age and everywhere, together with their children, profess the true religion, and to whom, in his loving kindness, he has granted the min-

istry, oracles and ordinances. Of course, this Church, which embraces all true believers and their children, is to-day divided and sub-divided into denominations and congregations.

ROBERT.—Well, Brother James, I have not thought much upon the subject, and am not prepared to deny your position, or to defend my own. Your definition of a Church sounds reasonable, and it does look like God would have had a Church in the world long before the opening of the Christian era. But I have always heard our preachers say that the Church was organized by John the Baptist, and for myself have given the matter no thought whatever.

JAMES.—It is not easy to tell from Baptist teaching anything clearly as to the author and origin of the Christian Church. Some of your preachers say John set it up, while others again say it was not set up until Pentecost. Hence, I do not think you stand alone, Brother Robert, in your ignorance of this subject. But I can see good reasons why your preachers should deny the existence of the Church previous to the Christian era.

ROBERT.—Brother James, if the Church existed previous to the Christian era, I cannot see just now why it should be denied. But our preachers deny the existence of a Church before John's day, and therefore I suppose there was no Church.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, your loyalty to your preachers cannot be doubted; but you will perceive that if they admitted the existence of the Church previous to the Christian era, they would place themselves in a very embarrassing position. For instance, they might be asked why they exclude infants and children from church membership? It is very evident that infants and children were members of the Church long before the Christian

era. But, even as it is, the position of you Baptists is not without confusion. If you, who are such sticklers for Church Order, would think about it, you would, or at least you could, see that the Church in its origin, according to *your* theory, arose in a very misty haze.

ROBERT.—Brother James, there is no “misty haze,” as you term it, about the origin of the Church from our standpoint. Without doubt, John the Baptist organized the Church, and that he did not admit infants and children into it is evident, for the people were baptized into repentance, and infants could not repent.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, your argument seems very plausible. But I would like to know by what authority John organized a Church? Such authority was not embraced in his commission. He was not sent to organize a Church, “but to prepare the way for the Lord.” Then, again, you Baptists will not take into your membership a person, though he may have been immersed, unless he had been immersed by a Baptist preacher. How does this consist with John’s case? You say John was a Baptist preacher. I ask you who made him such, and who immersed *him*? There should be consistency. If there was no Church before John, then John himself could not have been immersed, for there was no Baptist preacher to immerse him. If he was *not* immersed, he was not a Baptist preacher, and not being a Baptist preacher, he could not, according to Baptist theory and practice, admit any one into the Church.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I am afraid you have the best of me in this matter. But as I have just said, I have not given the subject any thought, and our preachers have all affirmed so often that John was a Baptist, and organized the Church, that I was entirely satisfied as to the truth of the matter.



JAMES.—Just so, Brother Robert. I think a large majority of your people are just like you in this particular. But allow me to put two simple and plain questions to you now: Did you ever hear any of your preachers produce a clear, logical argument from Scripture in favor of the position they take as to John organizing the Church? And did you ever hear any of your preachers give a clear, logical argument from Scripture in favor of immersion?

ROBERT.—Brother James, I believe I must admit that I have never heard any of them reason to any length on the subjects you mention, and, indeed, I never saw until now any necessity for an argument on them.

JAMES.—It is somewhat remarkable that they do not reason on these subjects—subjects of controversy—and if some of them do attempt it, they do not first establish the truth of their premises. They proceed upon the hypotheses that their premises are true, and true because they say so; when the fact is their conclusion is denied, because the truth of their premises is denied. If that upon which an argument is based is not admitted as true, the argument amounts to nothing. There is quite a difference between argument and affirmation. You immersers succeed beautifully in making affirmations—you affirm, affirm, affirm, and draw conclusions without first proving the truth of your affirmations, and you wonder that every one is not as ready to accept your affirmations as you are to make them. But let us return to the subject of baptism, and try to understand each other as we go along. Do I understand you to say that immersion and immersion *alone* is Christian baptism; and that baptism was intended to represent the burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ?

ROBERT.—You understand me correctly, Brother James.

That is my position, and the position of my Church? Now, what do *you* think baptism represents?

JAMES.—I think baptism represents the work of the Holy Spirit in that great change in man, usually called regeneration. Or, in other words, Christian baptism represents that baptism of the Holy Ghost spoken of by John and our Saviour.

ROBERT.—Our ideas then, Brother James, differ radically as to the thing represented. We immerse to represent the burial and resurrection of Christ; you sprinkle or pour to represent the baptism of the Holy Ghost. These things are different and distinct, and, of course, the things that represent them must be two, and different things. So that immersion being Christian baptism, sprinkling or pouring is not. I think you ought to admit this at once, Brother James.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, you reason like a Baptist, and quite as well, too, as most of your brethren. You overlook the fact that the very thing you affirm as true is the very thing I deny. You affirm that immersion is Christian baptism, and that is the very thing I deny. Now, it is for you to prove your proposition. Permit me to reason just as you have done. You notice that the things which we say baptism represents are two and distinct things. The burial and resurrection of Christ is altogether different from the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Now, as baptism was intended to represent the baptism of the Holy Ghost, nothing but sprinkling or pouring is Christian baptism, because nothing else can represent the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I see that my reasoning is very defective. Yours is as strong as mine, but both are wrong, because we have based our conclusion upon the very thing that is needed to be proved. *You* will not

admit my conclusion, because you deny immersion as Christian baptism, and I cannot admit yours, because I deny that sprinkling or pouring is.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, your readiness to admit an error when perceived, gives me great hope that we will derive much benefit from this discussion. While we have made no reference as yet to the Word of God on the subject engaging our attention, we have cleared away some of the brush from our pathway, and eliminated a matter from the discussion which has been a kind of camera obscura on the mind of people generally.

ROBERT.—To what do you refer, Brother James?

JAMES.—You know that most people, when speaking of the difference between immersion and sprinkling, speak of it only as a difference in the *mode* of baptizing.

ROBERT.—Yes, it is generally spoken of in that way.

JAMES.—But you see, we have disposed of that point, and laid it gently on the shelf.

ROBERT.—I am glad to hear you say so, Brother James; but, fearing I may not have clearly caught your point, I would be glad to have you explain yourself.

JAMES.—Certainly, my brother, I will do so with pleasure. The difference between us is not, as we have already admitted, a difference as to *mode* of administering baptism; but *as to baptism itself*. You say that *immersion* is Christian baptism, and that you immerse to represent the burial and resurrection of Christ; and I say that *sprinkling or pouring* is Christian baptism, and we sprinkle or pour to represent the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Now, as these things are radically different—for the work of the Holy Ghost is very different from the burial and resurrection of Christ—the things that represent them *must* be different, in the nature of the case. So that if immersion is Christian baptism, it is evident

sprinkling or pouring is not; and if sprinkling or pouring is Christian baptism, then immersion is not. They cannot both be Christian baptism, because they represent different things.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I am so glad you have made that statement. I have all along been aware of the fact that the controversy on baptism did not hinge on the question of *mode*, but on the thing itself, and this is why I was so anxious to get you right on the subject.

JAMES.—My dear brother, I am quite ready to admit a thing as true, when it is shown to be so.

ROBERT.—Then there is very little use for us to pursue the subject further, for you know that the word in Greek of which baptism is the Anglicized form, means to *immerse*; and one of the leading preachers of our denomination—Rev. Gustavus F. Davis—whose veracity cannot be doubted, says that “more than eighty Pedobaptist writers concede that this *is* the meaning, and that immersion was practiced by the Apostles, and by succeeding Christians, for thirteen hundred years from the commencement of the Christian era.”

JAMES.—Well, Brother Robert, I am not much of a Greek scholar, but my minister says that Liddell and Scott, in their Greek-English Lexicon, which is based on the German work of Francis Passow, give “to pour,” “to drench,” as meanings of that Greek word of which you speak. He says, also, that they say it sometimes means “to immerse,” “to dip.” Now, if so many meanings can be applied to a word, how is one to know when it means one thing in preference to another?

ROBERT.—Well, Brother, James, if your minister is correct in this, and I have no reason to doubt his word, I can only say—for I am not a Greek scholar myself—that the meaning of a word, at any time, should be known by the context, or circumstances of its use.



JAMES.—I think that is a common-sense view to take of the matter, and we will see how it works when we begin our study of the Scriptures. As to the statements made by that eminent Baptist preacher you have quoted—Rev. Gustavus F. Davis—I must say that his affirmations have no weight with me whatever, except as against himself. I think it detracts from a man's honor and dignity, and weakens his own argument, to produce witnesses in his behalf who stultify themselves by their evidence. He speaks of having "read of more than eighty Pedobaptist writers who gave immersion as *the* meaning of the original Greek word, and that immersion was practiced by the Apostles and succeeding Christians for thirteen hundred years." You notice he says that these upwards of eighty Pedobaptist writers continued to practice sprinkling or pouring after admitting that immersion was *the* meaning of the Greek word. He calls them Pedobaptists still, you perceive. Now, these were certainly not honest men, for if, after admitting that immersion is *the* meaning of the original Greek word, and that the Apostles immersed, and that succeeding Christians for thirteen hundred years immersed, they still go on to sprinkle or pour, their evidence is not good, nor worth anything, for it only proves their own dishonesty. Surely such men are not competent witnesses. Witnesses are not allowed to stultify themselves. If they do, their evidence is of no weight. So that Rev. G. F. Davis has weakened his cause instead of fortifying it. But then, the preacher you quote is guilty of duplicity, for he wishes to make the impression that all Christians practiced immersion for thirteen hundred years, and that these upwards of eighty Pedobaptist writers bear testimony to that fact. It is true that he does not say *all* Christians, but that "succeeding Christians" practiced immersion for thirteen hundred years.

It is evident, however, that he wishes the idea to take hold upon the mind, that *all* Christians practiced immersion for thirteen hundred years succeeding the Apostles. Now, even if I admitted the statement to be true—that Christians practiced immersion for that length of time—it would not be, as Rev. G. F. Davis puts it, an argument in favor of immersion as Christian baptism, or prove immersion to be right. It might prove the antiquity of immersion, but a thing may be very old and yet not be right. As an illustration: The Divinity of our Lord was denied during the time of the Apostles, and it is denied to-day, and has been denied all through the ages that have intervened. That is, his Divinity has been denied for 1,905 years. But this does not prove that our Lord is not Divine; it simply proves that this doctrine has existed for 1,905 years. So that the fact of the existence of a doctrine or practice for thirteen hundred, or even 1,905 years, does not prove that doctrine or practice to be right. It simply proves the existence of that thing for that length of time. Hence, you see that the argument of your friend, Rev. G. F. Davis, has lost its edge—it does not cut as keenly as you at first thought it would, or as he intended it should.

ROBERT.—I admit there is not so much in his argument as I at first imagined. Indeed I think his use of it was somewhat unfortunate. But what will you do with those other parts of his statement where he says: “that upwards of eighty Pedobaptist writers admit that immersion is *the* meaning of the original word *baptizo*. I believe it is, and that the Apostles practiced immersion”?

JAMES.—Well, Brother Robert, I very much doubt the truth of his statement as to the testimony of these Pedobaptist writers of whom he speaks. He wishes to make the impression that these writers admit that *baptizo* means

to immerse, and nothing else. Now, I have just told you that my minister said that Liddell and Scott, and that German whose Lexicon they took as a book of reference, gave "to pour" "to drench" as meanings of that Greek word; and I more than suspect that these more than eighty Pedobaptist writers, of whom he speaks, only admitted that immersion was *one* meaning, or *a* meaning of the original word. You know there is quite a difference between *a* and *the* as definitive words. Men who write on such subjects as Christian doctrine, and who are acquainted with the ancient Greek language, are, I think, as a whole, honest men, and men of strong convictions, and, in most cases, I believe, have the courage of their convictions. Now, those writers whose writings are worth quoting, can make an adequate support for themselves wherever they please to place themselves. Hence those Pedobaptists who admit that immersion is *the* meaning of the original Greek word, and who admit that the Apostles practiced immersion, would be likely to place themselves in line with their knowledge and convictions; and would be found among immersers, and not among Pedobaptists. This is why I think the statement, that Pedobaptists admit that immersion is *the* meaning, and the only meaning of the original word, must be taken with a grain of salt. If you immersers would only say that Pedobaptist writers admit, that immersion is *one* meaning of the original word, you would bring more credit to yourselves, and your arguments would, perhaps, have more force.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I am convinced that what you have said is true. To bring Pedobaptists forward in favor of immersion weakens our cause instead of giving it weight. But what do you say in reference to the Apostles and their practice of immersion?

JAMES.—Do not go too fast, my good brother. It re-

mains to be seen whether the Apostles practiced immersion. It seems to me that, if God intended that the common people should have his Word, that its language and ideas should be such as the common mind could grasp; and, therefore, I think that you and I should be nearly as competent to get at its meaning as those who make greater pretensions to intellectual culture. So that I think we may search the Word with a good deal of confidence, and I feel assured that, after our study, we will get pretty near to the truth on the subject of baptism. If the Apostles practiced immersion there should be no difficulty in perceiving it.

ROBERT.—I think so myself, Brother James. I am very much pleased with the discussion thus far. The only thing that gives rise to wonder in my mind is, your readiness to study the Scriptures with me on the subject of Baptism. I have never heard a Pedobaptist minister preach on baptism, and did not think they would be likely to take the Bible to sustain their doctrine. Our ministers preach often on the subject, and this is why we feel so sure of our ground.

JAMES.—Well, Brother Robert, I suppose you have not heard Pedobaptists preach very often on the subject of baptism. Indeed, I have not heard them very often myself. But then, one need not necessarily infer from that that they have no ground for their doctrine. Indeed, it might be true, and I think it is, that they feel so sure of their ground, they do not think it necessary to speak often about it. If the repetition of a thing made it true, you Baptists would have the truth about baptism, without a doubt. But let us get to the matter that has brought us together. You have already said that immersion, and immersion alone, is Christian baptism, and that it represents the burial and resurrection of Christ. I have said



that sprinkling or pouring alone is Christian baptism, and that it represents the baptism of the Holy Ghost. You perceive the distinction is clearly drawn, and I think the first thing we should do is, to try to find out, if we can, what Christian baptism was intended by our Lord to represent. It seems to me that if we can find out what baptism was intended to represent, it should not be hard to find the best way to represent that thing.

ROBERT.—I think your plan is a good one, Brother James, and we will now search the Scriptures and try to find out, if we can, what baptism was intended to represent. In order to do this we will read those passages where baptism is mentioned. But it is now getting late, and we will defer our search until to-morrow night, if that will suit you?

JAMES.—That will suit me very well, Brother Robert, and I look forward to your coming again with a good deal of interest.

On the following night, Robert presented himself at the home of his friend, and, as before, they retired to the library. Robert offered a short prayer with great earnestness for enlightenment and guidance by God's Spirit. After prayer James handed his friend a Bible, with the remark that both would use the Book, so that no mistake might be made in reading.

JAMES.—Now my friend, as you are to be my instructor, permit me to ask you *why baptism is practiced at all?*

ROBERT.—Because the Lord commanded it, of course. I am astonished, Brother James, that you should ask such a question.

JAMES.—Be patient with me, my good brother. No doubt I may ask many seemingly foolish questions; but you have expressed a desire that I should be immersed, or

baptized, as you call it, and as you are to be my teacher, in a sense, I wish my mind to be clear at every point. Now, I am going to ask another question, which may appear to you as foolish as the last, but still I want all the light I can get. *When* did our Lord give the command to which Christians are supposed to be rendering obedience; and where is it to be found?

ROBERT.—Our Lord gave the command after his resurrection, and you will find it in Matt. xxviii. 19.: “Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

JAMES.—Now, Brother Robert, is it an acknowledged and settled fact that the Lord gave this command *after* his resurrection, and that this is the command on which Christians base the sacrament of baptism?

ROBERT.—You astonish me, Brother James. I have never heard such questions asked before. *Of course this* is the command, as there is no other laid down in the New Testament.

JAMES.—Then I understand you to say that *this* command of our Lord is the only one in the New Testament in reference to baptism, and, consequently, the only one on which the Church bases the ordinance of Christian baptism?

ROBERT.—It can be none else, as no other is given; but you excite my mind not a little. I have never heard such questions asked before, and cannot conceive to what they lead. Let us now commence our examination of the Bible.

JAMES.—Keep cool, my brother, there is no occasion for alarm. You know you are the teacher and I the pupil, and my only object in asking questions is to get instruction, and to clear our path of all the brush that might entangle our feet, in our journey through God’s Word.

I suppose you perceive that your answers to these simple questions of mine have expedited our investigations very much. We need not now examine the Gospels as written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. This, you see, shortens the work before us a great deal.

ROBERT.—I am afraid I fail to understand you, Brother James. Are not we to search the Bible to find out, if we can, what Christian baptism was intended to represent, and is not the Gospel of our Lord part of the Bible? Why, then, should we not search the Gospels?

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I wish you to understand that I am as willing as you can possibly be to take the whole Word of God as “the man of our counsel;” but I cannot see the necessity to consider that portion of it which you yourself have excluded.

ROBERT.—Why, Brother James, you certainly must have misunderstood me. I have not excluded any portion of the Bible; at least I did not intend to do so.

JAMES.—Have you not just said that the command given by our Saviour to baptize is laid down in the 28th chapter of Matt., and 19th verse?

ROBERT.—Yes.

JAMES.—Well, was not this command given *after* his death and resurrection?

ROBERT.—Yes.

JAMES.—Does not the Gospel, as such, end with the record of such things as Jesus did and said?

ROBERT.—Yes.

JAMES.—Very well. If *this* is the command on which Christian baptism is based, and you say it is as no other is given, then no baptism on record previous to the command to baptize can be recognized as Christian baptism.

ROBERT.—Why, Brother James, you will surely admit that the baptisms performed by Jesus himself, as well as those by his disciples, were Christian baptisms?

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I am afraid you are allowing your imagination to run away with you. The Bible distinctly says that Jesus did not baptize, John iv. 2, and there is no record that up until after his resurrection, he *ordered his disciples* to baptize. And as Christians are rendering obedience to the command of Christ as laid down in Matt. xxviii., 19, it is evident they do not recognize any other authority. For them this stands first, and on it they base Christian baptism.

ROBERT.—But, Brother James, you will surely admit that John's baptism was Christian baptism. John immersed Christ, you know, and certainly that was Christian baptism.

JAMES.—Easy, easy my brother; not too fast just along here. You, yourself, have excluded John's baptism from Christian baptism, because it was performed before Christian baptism was instituted. I am willing to admit that John baptized Christ; but to say that he immersed him, is quite another thing, and remains to be proved. I can see, or think I can see, a distinction between the baptism of Christ and what is called Christian baptism. There may have been in vogue in John's day, or John may have instituted a thing called baptism; but that thing may have been, and I believe was, entirely different from Christian baptism in important characteristics. But to return to your statements. You say that the command of our Lord recorded in the last chapter of Matthew, is the one to which Christians are rendering obedience, and on which Christian baptism is based. Now, this being so, and I admit its truth, you will see at once that as Christian baptism gets its name because it was, and is, administered in obedience to this command, any baptisms which are not, and have not been, administered in obedience to this command, cannot, consistent with truth, be called Christian baptism.



ROBERT.—My brother, I think I must admit the justness of your reasoning, although I have never had occasion to think along these lines.

JAMES.—Well, Brother Robert, it is a good thing to have new avenues of thought opened up to us. But, to continue: Admitting the truth of what I have said, you will perceive at once, that John's baptism cannot be called Christian baptism, because it was not administered in obedience to this command of Christ. This command was not given until after his own and John's death; and certainly John could not have had his mind set upon obedience to a command that he had never heard. So that it must be admitted that John's baptism, whatever else it was, was not Christian baptism.

ROBERT.—I cannot but admit the truth of what you say, though I fear the consequences to my cause. I had never, in fact, thought along the line you have opened up. Indeed, all our ministers talk about John's baptism in such a way; and especially does Rev. Gustavus F. Davis, in his pamphlet, No. 138, published by the American Baptist Publication Society, speak of John's baptism as Christian baptism, so simply and with such apparent sincerity, that I took it for granted that what all these parties said was true. But your reasoning, Brother James, is so simple and plain that I cannot but admit its truth. I can see very clearly that two baptisms cannot be the same, when one was practiced before the other was instituted. Honesty compels me to admit that John's baptism was not Christian baptism.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, your ready admission of these plain truths is very gratifying indeed, and gives added testimony to your intellectual honesty. I do not think, however, that these admissions will injure your cause at all. It will simply do away, at least so far as

you are concerned, with the common cry of your Baptist brethren to us—"to follow Christ in baptism."

ROBERT.—But, Brother James, we must still say to you to follow Christ in baptism. I mean by that that you should be baptized as Christ was—by immersion—what the Apostles practiced.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, let us not take too much for granted. Let us move along in this matter slowly, and mark our way as we go. You Baptists are in the habit of taking too much for granted. You make assertions and just pass on as though what you said admitted of no controversy. We have found that John's baptism could not have been Christian baptism, because he was dead before Christian baptism was instituted. Now, if John's baptism was not Christian baptism, how can that be Christian baptism which takes it for a copy? It makes no difference as to the *mode* of his baptism—whether he applied the water to the subject, or the subject to the water. His was not Christian baptism, therefore any baptism that takes his as a copy cannot be Christian baptism. Now, why do you ask us as Christians to submit to a thing that is not Christian baptism? If it was not Christian baptism in John's day, the same thing cannot be Christian baptism now.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I cannot avoid your conclusion. Your reasoning is so clear and so conclusive, that only prejudice would try to deny it. I do not see at present what effect it will have on my side of the question, but I cannot avoid the truth of what you say. It is true that John baptized Christ, but it is also true that John's baptism was not Christian baptism, therefore to follow Christ in it, in the sense in which it is usually expressed, would not, in fact, be submission to Christian baptism.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I admire your nobleness of

mind in admitting so readily what you perceive to be the truth; although your admissions are evidently leading you out of your depth—at least, out of your general way of thinking. You Baptists are not much in the habit of reasoning on the subject of baptism. You make dogmatic assertions and expect, apparently, that every one will believe them; and you repeat them so often that, with the people as a whole, they have the same effect as if they were logically true. But, I assure you, by brother, that so far as I see at present, your admissions will neither injure your cause nor help my own. We have simply exposed a little sophistry which you Baptists play upon us as an argument in favor of immersion, and laid it upon the shelf. But this need not deter us from examining John's baptism, to see whether it had the same symbolic character as Christian baptism. Understand me my friend, the only objection I raise against John's baptism is against its use as an argument, either for or against *any mode* of Christian baptism. We just simply lay it to one side, in so far as an argument is concerned.

ROBERT.—Well, Brother James, under the circumstances, I can offer no objection to that. But suppose we find that John immersed, would it not be a circumstance favorable to immersion as baptism?

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I will make this concession to you at the very beginning: If we find that John immersed, I will admit that the Apostles immersed; for in all my reading of the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles I cannot see where any change was ordered, or introduced into the Christian Church, so-called.

ROBERT.—Well, Brother James, I must say that your concession is a very liberal one. I was beginning to feel somewhat shaky, as I always regarded John's baptism as a strong argument in favor of immersion as Christian

baptism. But now that I see it cannot be so used, your concession appears the more liberal. Now, I suppose we are ready to investigate the Scriptures on the subject.

JAMES.—Yes, I am ready, and, according to agreement, we are to try to find out what Christian baptism was intended to represent.

ROBERT.—Yes, that is what we have set ourselves to do, and it seems to me to be the very best way to terminate all discussion on the subject. If we can find out what Christian baptism was intended to represent, it ought not to be hard to find the best way to represent that thing with water.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, you take a sensible view of this matter, and I think our plan is the only one that will satisfy an honest mind. Let us now turn to the Word of God, and let us look it as squarely and honestly in the face, as we have done with one another thus far. The first place in which baptism is mentioned in the New Testament, is in Matthew, third chapter, and is in connection with John's preaching. Please read the 5th and 6th verses.

ROBERT.—“Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan; and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.” Now you see, Brother James, that John immersed, for all these people were baptized *in* Jordan, confessing their sins.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, you are leaving the point we set out to find. I neither admit nor deny that John immersed, for that point is not before us just now. We are trying to find out, if we can, what Christian baptism was intended to represent. If John's baptism is to be considered at all, it is only in the light of that question. Was it intended that John's baptism should represent anything? If so, what was it? We will have to give a



good deal of attention to the study of the Word, and yield less readily to impulse and sentiment. Please read the whole of the 3rd chapter of Matthew, Brother Robert, and tell me what you think was the object of John's mission in the world.

ROBERT.—Evidently the great object of his mission was "to prepare the way of the Lord," and in doing this he exhorted the people to repentance, and baptized them.

JAMES.—You have expressed it very well, Brother Robert. Baptism, then, was not the *principal* object of John's mission, as you Baptists would have us believe, but the preparation of the way of the Lord. This work did not consist in leveling the hills of the country, and cutting out ways in the wilderness; but in working upon the conscience of the people, and preparing them to receive the Lord with gladness, when he would come. John administered baptism on the promise of reformation of conduct—reformation of life was the great burden of his preaching. We learn this from the 7th and 8th verses. "When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance"—or, as you will find there in the margin of your Bible, "Bring forth therefore fruits answerable to amendment of life." So that John's preaching consisted in calling the people to repentance, and in directing their mind to the Lord Jesus, who was to come, and who should "baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire." He exhorted them to reformation of life, and baptized on the promise of this reformation. Hence, it is evident, that John's baptism had reference to this amendment of life, and was given as a sign of the change in their moral character.

ROBERT.—It seems to me, Brother James, that you have presented the truth in this connection, except that the Bible does not say anything about the people promising amendment of life.

JAMES.—But, my brother, the very fact of the people “confessing their sins” carries with it the idea that they would not any longer commit those sins. So that, in fact, they did promise reformation of life, and because of this promise, John baptized them. Hence, I repeat that John’s baptism was a *sign* or *token* of amendment of life. Now, this was as far as John and the people could go. The people could confess their sins and promise reformation of life, and John could baptize them as a token of this reformation. But here, both must stop. Neither *his* baptism nor *their* promise of reformation could produce a change in their heart, which is the seat of all moral right and wrong. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Hence, John, recognizing the impotency of all concerned, directs their mind to the Lamb of God, who would baptize them with the Holy Ghost, which baptism alone could produce that change in the heart which is necessary to a true and permanent change of life and character.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I think you have got that thing about right. It is almost equal to a sermon to listen to your explanation of the Scriptures.

JAMES.—Well, let us go a little further. John’s baptism, being a sign of reformation of conduct, which is outward, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost producing that change in the heart, which is inward, and which is necessary to all true and permanent change of moral character, must have been intended as a symbol, or representative of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I think John makes this plain himself in the 11th verse, when he says:

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." The very contrast of the two baptisms shows their relation to one another. John's baptism indicated the moral impurity of the party to whom it was applied; but the baptism of the Holy Ghost purifies the party to whom it is applied—the first is a symbol or representative of the second. This position is still further confirmed by the conversation between our Saviour and John when Jesus came to him for baptism. We will read the 13th and 14th verses: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" John here brings the two baptisms into contrast in such a way as to make his but a symbol of Christ's, which is by the Holy Ghost. It is the same as if he had said: "I baptize as a sign of amendment of life, which may or may not take place; but your baptism will actually produce that amendment. I am a man, like all other men, and therefore need the baptism of the Holy Ghost myself; but you are not like me and other men—you have not sinned and have therefore nothing to confess. I baptize unto repentance, but you have nothing to confess or repent of; my baptism therefore in your case would be a meaningless ceremony—it would symbolize nothing in your case." But the Lord himself confirms the symbolic character of John's baptism in his conversation with his disciples, just before his ascension, when he says: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." Acts i. 5. Here, you perceive, the Saviour connects the two baptisms in such a way as to make the one a representative of the other. John baptized with

water, but his baptism could confer no power, as it was merely a symbol of that baptism of the Holy Ghost, which would give power from above.

ROBERT.—I must confess, Brother James, that I can find no flaw in your exposition of John's baptism. I believe now, indeed, I cannot but believe, that John's baptism was a symbol of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I do not know what effect this is going to have on the doctrine of immersion, but I must yield to the truth as I perceive it as we go along.

JAMES.—Your readiness to acknowledge the truth is most commendable, my brother. But you remember we promised to divest our minds, as far as possible, of all early instruction and pre-conceived opinions on the subject of baptism, and take God's Word as the man of our counsel. Let us continue this, and I have no doubt but our investigation of the Scriptures will prove beneficial to us both in the end. We have now disposed of John's baptism, at least for the present, and as it is the only baptism treated of in the Gospel, we may push our investigations to the Acts and Epistles. But it is getting late, and we had better defer further study until another time. Can you come again to-morrow night?

ROBERT.—Yes, I will come again to-morrow night. I am getting very much interested in our meetings and propose continuing our investigations until we exhaust the subject of baptism.

JAMES. It will be a source of pleasure to me to meet you as often as you can come. Good-night.

On the following night Robert presented himself as usual at the home of James, and both retired to the library as before.

JAMES.—Having disposed of John's baptism, we will



now direct our attention to the baptisms mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles.

ROBERT.—The first baptisms mentioned after our Lord's ascension are recorded in the 2nd chapter of Acts. I will read the 37th and 38th verses: "Now, when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." And the 41st verse: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized."

JAMES.—The water baptism here, you perceive, is in connection with the baptism of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and was administered in the name of Jesus on their repentance and profession of faith in him. There are two ideas presented here in reference to the work of the Holy Spirit. The first is in producing in the heart that repentance which is accompanied with remission of sins; the second has reference to extraordinary power conferred upon the subjects of his gifts, as those on the Apostles in the early part of the day. Peter had just told the people of the great sin they had committed in crucifying the Lord Jesus—that God had exalted him, and that he, having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, had shed him forth in the manner they had just witnessed. And now, "be assured of this fact all ye of Israel," said Peter; "That God hath made this same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." The Holy Spirit used these words to convict the people of their sins, and they asked Peter and the rest what they should do. Peter replied that if they would take this same Jesus to be their Lord, they would receive remission of sins, and they were to show their acceptance of him

by submission to baptism in his name. This water baptism was evidently, therefore, a sign of their faith. But, as no man "can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost," if these parties truly accepted of Christ, they were led to do so by the Holy Ghost working in them; and hence their water baptism was not only a sign of their faith, but was also a *symbol* of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I think you have brought out the truth in reference to these baptisms. At least, I cannot refute what you have said. It is very evident, not only from the verses that contain the record of these baptisms, but from the whole chapter, that they were administered in connection with the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The next baptism recorded is in Acts viii. 12, 13. I will read the passage: "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done."

JAMES.—You will notice, Brother Robert, that water baptism is mentioned here in connection with a profession of faith. It was after the men and women made a profession of their faith in Christ they were baptized. It was after Simon believed that he was baptized. This teaches very clearly that water baptism was administered not only as a sign of their faith, but as a symbol of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Faith is the instrument of our salvation, and as regeneration or the second birth, or baptism of the Holy Ghost, is the initiatory step in salvation; faith in Christ indicates our salvation: and as baptism with water was applied to these parties on their profession of faith, it is evident that baptism was adminis-

tered to them, not only as an outward sign of their faith, but as a symbol of the Holy Spirit's work within them, that work which gave rise to their faith.

ROBERT.—Brother James, your explanation of these incidents is clear and satisfactory. I had never examined these baptisms closely, and, consequently, had not reasoned out their symbolic character. But I am perfectly satisfied your reasoning is correct. At all events, I am unable to controvert it. The next baptism is that of the eunuch, and is recorded in this same 8th chapter of the Acts. I am anxious to hear what you will do with that. I think you will have some trouble in shutting immersion out of that baptism.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I am not going to try to shut immersion out of that case, for immersion is not before us just now. We are trying to find out, if we can, what Christian baptism was intended to represent; and we are examining the Scriptures to that end. In the case of the eunuch, quite a number of verses should be read in order to get a full and comprehensive view of the incident. But there is a short and pretty clear statement made in the 36th, 37th and 38th verses, which you will please read.

ROBERT.—“And as they went on their way, they came to a certain water; and the eunuch saith, See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”

JAMES.—Now, Brother Robert, what do you think of this baptism—on what did it hinge?

ROBERT.—Evidently it hinged on a profession of faith

by the eunuch. I do not think there is any doubt as to that. The eunuch asks the question: "Is there any reason why I should not be baptized?" Philip replies: "There is not, if thou believest with all thine heart." Then the eunuch said: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." It is very clear that the baptism of the eunuch was suspended on his faith, or his profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I think you have brought out the truth in this case; and from your own reasoning you make the baptism of the eunuch dependent upon his profession of faith, and, consequently, a symbol of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

ROBERT.—I don't see that just so clearly. I see that baptism was suspended upon a profession of faith; but I do not see that the water was a symbol of the Holy Spirit's work.

JAMES.—Well, let us reason a little upon this case. If you turn to the 1st Epistle of John iv. 15, you will see that: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him;" and, again, in 1st John v. 1: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." Now, if we carry these passages to the case of the eunuch, we will see how it will pan out. The eunuch asked the question, "Is there any reason why I should not be baptized?" Philip replied: "There is not, if you believe that Jesus is the Son of God." Now, John informs us that no one can truly believe that Jesus is the Son of God, but those upon whom the Holy Spirit performs his work of regeneration. Hence, you perceive that the baptism of the eunuch really hinged on the baptism of the Holy Ghost; and Philip is to be assured of the Holy Spirit's work in the eunuch, by his profession of faith. So that the baptism in this case was a sign of faith, and a symbol of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.



ROBERT.—Brother James, your explanation is very clear and entirely satisfactory; although I must say that the baptisms thus far examined make great inroads on my theory of baptism.

JAMES.—The next baptism recorded is that of Saul, or Paul, and is found in Acts ix. 17, 18. Please read, Brother Robert.

ROBERT.—“And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.”

JAMES.—Now, what do you think of this baptism, Brother Robert; what was it intended to represent?

ROBERT.—Well, Brother James, this is not so clear to me as some of the other cases we have examined. Still, the baptism of Saul is so intimately connected with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that it is hard not to make the one a symbol of the other. Saul had shown his faith by a willingness to do whatever the Lord commanded him. Evidently the man was “born again” where he met the Lord on the road, but until the time that Ananias went to him had had no opportunity to be baptized. As his baptism so closely follows his filling by the Holy Ghost, I would be afraid to say that it was not a sign, or symbol of the work of the Holy Ghost.

JAMES.—I think you have brought out the truth in this case, Brother Robert. The only fault I find in you is your timidity in expressing your convictions. The next baptism recorded is in Acts x. 44-48. Please read.

ROBERT.—“While Peter yet spake these words, the



Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost; For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we. And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

JAMES.—What do you think of these baptisms, Brother Robert; what do you think the water represented in these cases?

ROBERT.—There is no room for doubt in this instance. The evidence is so very clear as to the representative character of the water in these baptisms, that one must shut his eyes not to see it. It is so closely allied to the work of the Holy Ghost, and Peter so closely and clearly connects them that, to make the water baptism anything else than a symbol of the Spirit's work, would be a wilful distortion of the meaning of language.

JAMES.—I quite agree with you, Brother Robert. We will therefore pass on to the next baptism. You will find it in Acts xvi. 14, 15. Please read.

ROBERT.—"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, if ye have judged me faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there."

JAMES.—You notice, Brother Robert, that this baptism, like the others, is connected with the work of the Holy Ghost. It was after the opening of the heart that Lydia was baptized. The opening of the heart is always spoken

of in the Scriptures as the work of the Holy Ghost. Evidently the baptism in Lydia's case was the outward sign of the inward work upon the heart—that work which is called the baptism of the Holy Ghost, or the second birth. There is another baptism recorded in this 16th chapter of Acts. Let us examine it. Read from the 28th to the 34th verses inclusive.

ROBERT.—“But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, do thyself no harm; for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway.”

JAMES.—Now, what do you think of this baptism, Brother Robert?

ROBERT.—Well, it was after the preaching of the word of the Lord, and after they were exhorted to believe, they were baptized. I suppose the jailer and those with him had professed faith in the Lord, whom Paul preached.

JAMES.—You are very nearly correct in your conclusion, Brother Robert. The only fault is you go a little too far. We cannot be too careful in handling the Word of God.

ROBERT.—I do not see the point you are trying to make, Brother James. I do not think I have gone too far. Show me what you mean.

JAMES.—Well, Brother Robert, what I refer to may seem trifling to you, and to some of your Baptist friends, but there is a great deal wrapped up in it. You say “you suppose that the jailer and those with him had professed

faith in the Lord whom Paul preached." Now, what I object to is your statement that "those with the jailer made a profession of faith." The Bible does not say that the jailer's household made a profession of faith. We had better stick to the Bible.

ROBERT.—Well, Brother James, I see the point you make, but cannot see that it amounts to much.

JAMES.—It amounts to a good deal, brother, because it teaches that *some* parties were baptized who *did not* make a profession of faith. Do you catch on?

ROBERT.—I understand what you say very well, but do not see any force in it.

JAMES.—My principal object was to get you to confine yourself to Scripture language, at least not to draw conclusions that the Scriptures do not warrant. You Baptists say that *none* should be baptized but those who make a profession of faith. Now, this Scripture teaches that *some were* baptized who did *not* make a profession. But we are wandering from the matter before us. We are trying to find out what baptism was intended to represent. In this case the baptism was administered as a sign of the work of the Holy Ghost in those who professed faith in Christ. The next baptism recorded is in Acts xviii. 8. I will read it. "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized." You see that these baptisms are also connected with the work of the Holy Ghost.

ROBERT.—I do not see that so clearly as you appear to do. They were baptized after making a profession of faith. One thing I do see, and that is, that all the passages of Scripture yet examined are very much against your doctrine as to the baptism of infants—infants cannot make a profession, and therefore should not be baptized.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, will you please let your mind revert to the baptisms of the jailer's household. Are we not taught there that *some were* baptized who *did not* make a profession of faith? Are you prepared to prove that there were no infants in that household? We are informed also, that Lydia's household was baptized, and yet there is no record that any one made a profession of faith but Lydia. Are you prepared to prove that there were no infants, or little children in Lydia's household? Now, these instances of baptism clearly prove that *some* were baptized who did not make a profession of faith. And until you can prove there were no infants or children in these households, I think fear of getting beyond the truth should withhold you from condemning infant baptism. But if your doctrine against infant baptism is a source of any pleasure to you, you can retain it just as long as you please. Only bear in mind that the object before us at the present time is not infant baptism, neither is it immersion, but what water baptism was intended to represent. Immersion has taken such a hold upon you Baptists that anything which appears to lend even the shadow of proof to any of your doctrines, is seized upon with avidity, and used even to abuse. I think if the thing was sifted out closely, your opposition to infant baptism would be found to rest, not so much on Scriptural grounds, as the *danger* to infants through immersion—death through strangulation would probably ensue. I believe this is a stronger argument against infant immersion—or baptism as you call it, than anything you can find in the Bible. But as I before remarked, this is not the question before us just now. The next baptism recorded is in Acts xix. 5. Please read from the 1st to the 5th verses.

ROBERT.—“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos



was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost: And he said unto them: Unto what, then, were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

JAMES.—Now, Brother Robert, tell me what you think of these baptisms.

ROBERT.—Well, Brother James, I scarcely know what to think. My mind staggers as never before in reading this Scripture. New thoughts come to me. The idea presents itself without any effort of the mind, that John's baptism was not Christian baptism, or Paul would not have baptized these believers over again.

JAMES.—You think, then, that Paul re-baptized these believers?

ROBERT.—I do not think there is any room for doubt on that point. The Scriptures are so plain that I would have to do an injury to my mind and conscience to deny it. These baptisms place an instrument in your hands that cuts at the very root of John's baptism—whatever it's mode—as an argument either for or against any mode of Christian baptism. My own self-respect leads me to admit that these believers were baptized over again.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I admire your moral honesty and uprightness of mind, and whatever may be the outcome of our present investigation of the Word, I shall esteem you more highly than ever before. And I assure you



that, should the occasion arise during our examination of the Scriptures, if I find that their teaching runs counter to any of my pre-conceived opinions, I shall try to yield to the Bible as gracefully as you have done. There is no doubt in your mind, then, about these believers being re-baptized by Paul?

ROBERT.—Not any at all. The Scriptures are plain enough on that point. Paul met certain believers at Ephesus who had heard John preach, and who had been baptized by him. They had, perhaps, seen Jesus when he came to John for baptism, and heard him say, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." They may have heard Jesus himself preach before leaving Judea for Asia Minor. But evidently they had left Judea before the day of Pentecost. Paul enquires as to their Christian experience and asks them "if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed?" No doubt, having reference to the extraordinary powers conferred by him on many disciples. On acknowledging their ignorance of the existence of the Holy Ghost, Paul expresses astonishment, as shown in the question he asks, "Unto what, then, were ye baptized?" They answered, "Unto John's baptism." Then Paul draws the distinction between John's and Christian baptism, which is administered in the name of the Holy Ghost. The fourth and fifth verses clearly show that these disciples were baptized over again. Paul says in the 4th verse, "John verily baptized unto repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him, which should come after him." The remainder of this verse is Paul's explanation as to the party to whom John referred as the one who was to come after him—that is, Jesus Christ. John never used these titles—Christ Jesus—in all his preaching and baptizing. He did say the "Lamb of God," and he heard the Voice

say of Jesus, "this is my beloved Son." But he nowhere uses the titles, Christ Jesus, in all his ministrations.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, your explanation is clear and satisfactory, and just such an one as I would have given myself if called upon. But I was anxious to know how you would explain this incident, when your mind was free from any bias that might be made on it by others. These baptisms also, then, had reference to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I suppose you are aware that your deductions are directly contrary to those of your favorite writer, Rev. Gustavus F. Davis, in his pamphlet, No. 138, published by the American Baptist Publication Society. On page 5 of that pamphlet he explains this incident in this way: "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus Christ. When they (*i. e.*, the *people* to whom John preached) heard this, they were baptized in the name of Jesus." You observe that, according to Mr. Davis, it was not the people to whom Paul was speaking, that were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, but the people to whom John spoke.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I have, at my home, the pamphlet you refer to, written by Brother Davis, and, of course, have read it, and have always considered it a strong argument in favor of immersion. Of course, I have read his explanation of the baptisms now before us, and accepted of that explanation as the true one; but I did not read the Bible in connection with his explanation. I am ashamed and sorry for both Brother Davis and myself. For him, because he exposes his lack of mental grasp by inability to perceive the grammatical construction of that portion of Scripture, and weakens the cause of immersion by displaying duplicity. For myself, because I was will-

ing, without thinking for myself, to accept of anything from a Baptist preacher on the subject of immersion that seemed to strengthen the doctrine.

JAMES.—Well, let us leave Mr. Davis to settle the matter with his own conscience, and return to the study of the Word. The next mention of baptism is in Acts xxii. 16. You perceive, that Paul is here making his defence, and, in relating the circumstances of his conversion, mentions his baptism by Ananias. We have already had this baptism under consideration, so we may pass on to another. The next mention of baptism is in Romans vi. 3, 4. Please read these Scriptures, Brother Robert.

ROBERT.—“Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Now, Brother James, I don’t think you can get around this Scripture. This teaches immersion so clearly that it lifts the question out of controversy—“Buried with him by baptism.” Is not that clear enough?

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I have no desire whatever to “get around Scripture.” I am alone anxious to find out what the Scriptures teach. If I can get that clearly, I tell you candidly, I shall relinquish all pre-conceived opinions on the subject of baptism should the Bible run counter to them. By God’s grace I will follow the Bible wherever it leads. But, please do not let your zeal outrun your good sense. You perceive that the word baptism, in this place, is used in connection with the *death* of Christ, and not his *burial* and *resurrection*. There is not a word said about his burial. Now, as we are trying to find out what baptism was intended to represent, and, as it is used here in connection with Christ’s *death*, and not his burial and

resurrection, it has no bearing on the subject before us, so we may pass on. I think we shall have this Scripture before us again before we conclude our examination, and we shall then try to find out just what it does teach. I have observed a wonderful similarity of procedure among you immersers when discussing the subject of baptism. I do not mean to give you offense, but I must say that you all expose a shallowness of mind—a lack of logical acumen and force, when speaking upon the subject of baptism. Your imagination is so lively that you mistake a shadow for a fact; you substitute affirmations for facts, and reiteration for logic. I have never heard or read a good, sound, logical argument from a Baptist minister or layman on the subject of baptism. But let us go back to our investigation. The next place in which baptism is mentioned is in 1st Corinthians i. 12-17. Please read, Brother Robert, and tell me what you think of this baptism.

ROBERT.—“Now, this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius. Lest any should say I baptized in my own name.” Paul is here referring to the baptism of these parties which had been administered to them sometime before. This teaches nothing, so we may pass on.

JAMES.—You are correct, Brother Robert. The next baptism mentioned is in 1st Cor. x. 2. Please read.

ROBERT.—“And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” Evidently there is no reference here either to the baptism of the Holy Ghost, or the burial and resurrection of Christ.

JAMES.—Just so. Pass to the next place where baptism is mentioned, and read it; 1st Cor. xii. 13.



ROBERT.—“For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free.” Evidently the Apostle is here speaking of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

JAMES.—You are correct, Brother Robert. You have noticed, no doubt, how frequently the Apostle speaks of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the emphasis he places upon it. The next place in which baptism is mentioned is in 1st Cor. xv. 29, and has reference apparently to a custom of baptizing a living person for a dead one. As it throws no light on Scripture baptism, we may pass on. The next reference to baptism is in Gal. iii. 27. Please read and tell me what you think of it.

ROBERT.—“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.” This evidently has reference to that baptism of the Holy Ghost by which we are united to Christ.

JAMES.—Your views of this passage agree with my own, Brother Robert. The next mention of baptism is in Eph. iv. 5. Please read and give me your views of that passage.

ROBERT.—“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” This portion of Scripture is a strong argument in favor of the Baptist’s position, that is, that there is only *one mode* of baptism, and as that is immersion, only immersion can be right.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, no doubt your language sounds well to your own ears, as it would in the ears of all your Baptist brethren, could they hear it. One of the difficulties one has to meet in discussing baptism with a Baptist is—holding him to the *point*. In your case, I can



scarcely find an excuse for you. I have so frequently had occasion to call your attention to the matter directly before us, that, it seems to me, it should so have impressed itself upon your mind as to prevent your leaving it. We are not now discussing a *mode* of baptism; and as to your conclusion that immersion alone is baptism, permit me to say that that is the very point in controversy. That is the thing to be proved, and right here I might say that I could very easily place you in what you might find to be a very embarrassing position, a position which you and other Baptists are careful not to assume. That is to *prove* that immersion is Scripture baptism. You forget that the burden of proof lies with those who affirm a proposition, and not with those who deny its truth. You Baptists affirm that immersion alone is Christian baptism, and lay it upon Pedobaptists to prove that it is not; and we have always taken up the burden and carried it, I believe, with a good deal of ease. But this plan should be reversed, and you should be called upon to prove your proposition true. This, I am inclined to think, you would find rather difficult. It was to relieve *you* of this burden that I suggested the plan agreed upon in our discussion on baptism. And I again call your attention to the fact that we are not now seeking for a *mode* of baptism. It is very evident to one with an unjaundiced mind, that the baptism referred to in Eph. iv. 5, can be none other than the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which unites all with Christ, and which brings all who experience it into the spiritual kingdom of our Lord. The next mention of baptism is in Col. ii. 12. Please read it, Brother Robert.

ROBERT.—“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” I think, Brother James, you can scarcely avoid immersion in this baptism—“buried with him,” you see.

JAMES.—My good brother, I am not trying to avoid anything. I am trying to find out what the Bible teaches on baptism. In the passage before us, I see we are buried with Christ in a baptism of some kind. I think you will have noticed that this is the *first* place where baptism is mentioned in connection with burial, even remotely, and I assure you it is the last place. We will look into this Scripture more closely later on. The next place in which baptism is mentioned is in Heb. vi. 2. Read it, Brother Robert.

ROBERT.—“Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”

JAMES.—You notice that the word is in the plural number here—“baptisms.” How does that tally with your doctrine of one baptism—immersion—Brother Robert? Evidently the Jews called more than one thing by the name of baptism. I think that, from the preceding portion of this Epistle, the Apostle is referring here to the different applications of water by the Jews in washings for purification. The next mention of baptism is in 1st Peter iii. 21. Please read.

ROBERT.—“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

JAMES.—Now, here we find the words “baptism” and “resurrection” mentioned in the same verse, but certainly not in the way of one representing the other.

ROBERT.—No, Brother James; in reading this portion of Scripture I would never imagine that the Holy Spirit meant that baptism represented the resurrection of Christ.

JAMES.—Now, my brother, we have had before us all the passages of the New Testament in which the word

baptism occurs, in the way of an original statement. There are other places where baptism is mentioned, but they are only repetitions of the passages we have examined. We have had before us twenty-three passages, and only in *one* of them is baptism mentioned with the burial of Christ, and that only in a very remote way ; and in *one* verse baptism is mentioned with resurrection ; and *never at all* is baptism mentioned with both the burial and resurrection of Christ. Twenty-one times baptism is mentioned with faith and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and that in such a way as to indicate clearly that water baptism was intended to represent the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Now, if preponderance of evidence is any assurance of truth, the truth is certainly on the side of the position that Christian baptism was intended to represent the baptism of the Holy Ghost. There are twenty-one to one in its favor. It is a notable fact that there is not one passage in the whole New Testament that would evoke the idea, that baptism was intended to represent the burial and resurrection of Christ.

ROBERT.—Brother James, you have presented this matter to me in a new light. I had never thought to search the Scriptures to find out what our Lord intended that baptism should represent. I have always heard, and never imagined anything to the contrary, that baptism represented the burial and resurrection of Christ ; but with these Scriptures staring me in the face, I cannot but admit that our position is wrong and that you are right.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I do not see that the yielding of this point will injure your cause to any great extent. If Christian baptism by immersion rests upon nothing stronger than that it represents the burial and resurrection of our Lord, it certainly rests upon a weak foundation. Now, as these twenty-one witnesses of the Bible show

that baptism was intended to represent the baptism of the Holy Ghost, all that is necessary to do in order to know how to administer it, is to find out the *mode* of the Spirit in his work.

ROBERT.—You certainly are correct in that, Brother James. If Christian baptism is a symbol, the mode of administration must bear some resemblance to the thing symbolized. If Christian baptism symbolizes the baptism of the Holy Ghost we must find out, if we can, how the Holy Ghost baptizes. If we can find the *mode* of his operations, then Christian baptism must be performed in the way that will best represent that.

JAMES.—Just so, Brother Robert. But before proceeding to examine the Scriptures as to the *mode* of the Spirit in his work, I call your attention to a *principle* in connection with immersion that seems to me to be in conflict with your doctrine of baptism. I presume *you* can reconcile the matter and make it clear to me. All Baptists, so far as I know, before proceeding to immerse, endeavor to ascertain whether the subject for immersion has been the object of the Holy Spirit's operations in regeneration—all have to make a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus. If it is found that the person applying for immersion has not been regenerated, or that the profession of faith is not satisfactory, immersion is denied him. Is this so?

ROBERT.—Certainly, Brother James; all have to make a profession of faith. This is in harmony with the Scriptures.

JAMES.—I am not talking about the Scriptures now, but about the *practice* of the Baptist Church; although, by the way, it is not in harmony with the Scriptures, for we found that in the households of the jailer and Lydia *some* were baptized who *did not* make a profession of



faith. From what you say, then, immersion, or what you call baptism, hinges on a profession of faith. This being true, it logically follows that this profession of faith, upon which immersion hinges, connects it with the work of the Holy Spirit; because it is the Holy Spirit that gives rise to faith as a saving grace. The principle involved in this is at variance with the doctrine that baptism represents the burial and resurrection of Christ. If it is true that one cannot experience the saving power of Christ except through the Holy Spirit's work in regeneration, and if immersion is suspended upon an expression of this experience, it would seem more conformable with the operations of the mind to connect immersion with the work of the Holy Spirit, rather than with the burial and resurrection of Christ. I can see no possible connection between faith and the burial and resurrection of Christ. Certainly the burial and resurrection of Christ do not produce faith—are not the ground of faith. When a person is relating his experience, his mind is occupied with what he conceives brought about this new state of affairs within him, and which has induced him to seek what is called baptism; but no one would imagine that the burial and resurrection of Christ gave rise to this experience. Hence, the mind, in its natural operations, would connect that which is suspended upon Christian experience—which is immersion—with that which gave rise to this experience—which is the work of the Holy Ghost—and not the burial and resurrection of Christ. And so, I repeat, there is conflict between the principle involved and the doctrine of immersion. If immersion is suspended upon a profession of faith, and this profession suspended upon the work of the Holy Ghost, one cannot help connecting in his mind, if he thinks at all, his baptism with the Spirit's work. In the case of immersion,



then, you see that an outward act—immersion—will not be performed until the assurance is given that the Holy Ghost has accomplished an inward work—regeneration. And yet that outward act—immersion—has no reference whatever to the inward work of the Holy Spirit, upon which it hinges. The hiatus between a profession of faith, upon which immersion is suspended, and the burial and resurrection of Christ, is too great for the ordinary mind to bridge and bring them into such relation as is said to exist between baptism and the burial and resurrection of Christ.

ROBERT.—My dear Brother James, I listen in amazement to what you say. I had never thought upon these things, but I recognize the inconsistency of our doctrine and practice. I feel that you are tearing the foundations from under me, and wonder that I had not given this matter more thought. I am afraid that many of my fellow church members are resting, like myself, on impressions made by the often-repeated statements of our preachers.

JAMES.—Do not be alarmed, my dear brother. If I have to remove your foundations, I promise to do it kindly, and will only remove a little at a time, so as not to shock your sensibilities. But to return to our work. We are now to search the Scriptures to see how the Holy Ghost performs his baptism. But it is getting late, and we had better defer this until to-morrow night, if you can come.

ROBERT.—Very well, Brother James, we will part for the night, but I will be with you again as early as possible to-morrow night. I am looking forward with great interest to the result of our Bible study. You make your explanations so clear, and yet so simple, that I am ashamed I have not given more earnest study to the Word of God. Good-night.

On the following evening Robert presented himself as before, and was shown to the apartment in which they studied, and found his friend already seated there.

JAMES.—Good evening, Brother Robert. We are now to search the Scriptures for the *mode* of the Holy Spirit in his baptism. The first miraculous manifestation of the Holy Ghost after the ascension of our Lord, is on the day of Pentecost. This evidently is that baptism of the Holy Ghost of which John the Baptist prophesied, and which the Saviour said would endue his Apostles with power from on high. This baptism gave rise to a wonderful deal of curiosity and excitement, and the people crowded together to inquire about it. There were differences of opinion as to its cause; some attributed it to one thing, and some to another. Some said they were intoxicated with wine, while others denied this on the ground that wine did not give the ability to speak in different languages. Peter embraces the opportunity and the occasion to preach Jesus to them, and to explain the whole matter. He said: "This is the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel." Please read Joel ii. 28, 29, Brother Robert.

ROBERT.—"It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days I will pour out my Spirit."

JAMES.—Now, Peter says this work of the Spirit is the fulfilment of that prophecy. The Spirit, then, was *poured out*, you perceive. But this work of the Spirit is called a baptism; so that the *mode* of the Spirit in his baptism, in this instance, is pouring. Another instance of the baptism of the Holy Ghost is recorded in Acts x. 44, 45. Please read.

ROBERT.—“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word, and they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

JAMES.—Now, Peter calls this the baptism of the Holy Ghost in the 11th chapter of Acts, 15th and 16th verses; and he there says the Holy Ghost “fell upon” the people. So that the expressions “poured out” and “fell upon” mean the same thing. The fact is, Brother Robert, that all through the Word of God, where reference is made to the work of the Holy Spirit, he is spoken of as “coming upon,” “falling on,” being “poured out,” or “poured upon,” as in Isaiah xxxii. 15: “Till the Spirit be poured upon us.” Isaiah xlv. 3: “I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed.” Ezek. xxxix. 29: “For I have poured my Spirit upon the house of Israel.” Joel ii. 28: “I will pour out my Spirit.” In all cases the Spirit is spoken of as *coming upon* the object of divine grace. Now, we find from the Word of God that the *mode* of the Spirit in his operations, and which is called his baptism, is by “falling upon,” “coming upon,” or being “poured upon;” and, as water baptism, as we have found, is a symbol of the Holy Spirit’s baptism, in order to be rightly administered, must come upon, or be poured upon or sprinkled on the subject, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

ROBERT.—Brother James, you have done away with immersion in short order—swept me off my feet, in fact; and yet, if there is anything wrong with your exposition and reasoning, I have failed to perceive it. Assuredly, the Scriptures we have examined sustain you at every step.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, you will have perceived that no effort has been made to strain Scripture, or give to its

language a foreign sense—it has been taken in its plain and obvious meaning. Indeed, the interpretation of the Word has been largely with yourself, and the result thus far has been, that the Scriptures teach baptism was intended to represent or symbolize the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and hence the *mode*, to be in accord with the baptism it represents, must be by pouring or sprinkling—the water coming upon the subject.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I cannot but admit the correctness of all you have said, for the Bible sustains you. But I am astonished that your method of dealing with the subject—which certainly is the most sensible and correct—has never presented itself to my mind before.

JAMES.—There is scarcely any room for astonishment, Brother Robert; my plan was yours also, you know. I think the real difficulty in your case is—you have really never given the subject any thought at all. You have heard again and again that nothing is Christian baptism but immersion, and the thing has been so often repeated that it has fixed itself upon your mind without any effort of your own, and a few passages of Scripture have been quoted which you have been told teach immersion, and which, to a casual observer, appear to do so. But you have never gone to the Scriptures to find out whether immersion is really taught there. In other words, you have never gone to the Bible with a doubt in your mind as to the truth of the doctrine of immersion, and consequently, could never see anything against it.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I admit, with shame to myself—and, I fear most of our people are like me—that I have never really given the subject any deep thought. I have allowed others to do my thinking for me, and, as you remarked, with a few casual glances at a few Scripture passages, I have rested satisfied that I was well fortified



on the subject of baptism. This was why I courted this discussion, for I believed I could soon show you your error. Still, I would like to hear how you will explain those passages which are quoted in favor of immersion, and which still appear to me to contain that idea.

JAMES.—All in good time, my brother. We Presbyterians are a slow-moving people. We like to get at the *bottom* of things, and to get a *reason* for things. Now, there are some things connected with your doctrine, that baptism represents the burial and resurrection of Christ, that appears absurd to us, if nothing worse. For instance, we cannot see how one can, with the Word of God in his hand, teach that Christian baptism was intended to represent the burial and resurrection of Christ, when there is not one passage in the whole New Testament that brings them into even proximate relation, not one passage that speaks of the burial and resurrection as a baptism. Now, as the burial and resurrection are no where called a baptism, it seems somewhat incongruous to call that a baptism which represents these things. But there is a worse feature than this connected with the doctrine, and we have wondered that Baptists—who are generally so sound in doctrine—have not discovered it. Of course, you see at once that the burial and resurrection of Christ are *two* and very distinct things; and that they were performed by two and very distinct parties; and they bear no necessary relation the one to the other. The burial bears no relation whatever to the resurrection, nor the resurrection to the burial. In immersion, the two acts—putting into the water and taking out of the water—are so dependent the one upon the other, that the thing would not be complete in the absence of either. In order to take one out of the water he must first be in it. But such relation and dependence does not exist in the case of Christ's burial



and resurrection. In immersion the *taking out* of the water depends upon the *putting into* the water; but surely it will not be contended that the resurrection of Christ depended upon his burial. Resurrection means resuming or coming to life again; and certainly Christ would have come to life again had they left his body hanging upon the cross. Every one knows that the resumption of life does not depend upon burial. If it did, there would be millions of the sons of Adam who would never be resurrected, for there are countless thousands of them who have never been buried.

ROBERT.—I had never thought upon the point you have just presented. I can see very well there is no resemblance in fact between immersion and the burial and resurrection of Christ. I think it very unfortunate that our church has ever taught the doctrine, that baptism represents the burial and resurrection.

JAMES.—To my mind, Brother Robert, there is another feature attaching to your doctrine still more repulsive than any yet mentioned. You are aware that the burial and resurrection of Christ are two distinct and separate things, and were performed by two distinct parties. The burial was the act of *men*; the resurrection was the act of *God*; so that, if immersion represents the burial and resurrection of Christ, we have a divine ordinance in the Christian Church to represent the work of men, and at the same time the act of God. This is something unique—there is nothing like it again in the whole Word of God. It stands alone in the great work of redemption, in its execution and application. Any one who reads the Bible with the least degree of care, will see that man is never regarded as an active agent in the great plan of redemption, either in its execution or application. He is the object of it, and that is all. I have yet to read in the

Scriptures where God has, at any time, instituted a sacrament, set up an ordinance in his Church to represent man's work in salvation. Such an act of God would be a recognition of man's efficient agency in his own salvation, and would be a direct contradiction of the whole teaching of the Bible. The doctrine that Christian baptism was intended to represent the burial and resurrection of Christ is so repugnant to the Word of God, that it is strange any one is found to advocate it. There is nothing in the great plan of human redemption, either in its design, execution or application, that depends upon the burial of Christ. It *does* nothing, and *represents* nothing, and nothing *depends* upon it. It was simply a kind and loving act of friends, and was in strong contrast to the act that preceded it—the crucifixion. But it affected nothing, either as to Christ or salvation. It was the act of men only. He who reads the Word of God with any degree of care, will see at once that, where it treats of salvation at all, its whole effort is directed to turn men's minds away from themselves and from their fellowmen, and fix them upon God and his Son, Jesus Christ. And in the face of all this, to think and to teach that Christ instituted a sacrament in his Church, set up an ordinance that was to continue for all time, to represent and commemorate an act of men, and which, in the very nature of the case, would turn men's minds away from the *true* source of spiritual strength to this act as a substitute, is something so repugnant to the Word of God and the fitness of things, that it would require a clear cut, concise and positive, "thus saith the Lord," to induce one to believe it.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I can only repeat that, it is very unfortunate that our Church has ever taught the doctrine that Christian baptism was intended to represent

the burial and resurrection of Christ. It is plain that that contention must be given up. But I feel convinced that this cannot be the only thing on which my Church bases immersion. Our Church is too large and too respectably intellectual to differentiate itself on a doctrine based on so insecure a foundation as that the sacrament of baptism was intended to represent the burial of Christ. Indeed, I see clearly now that this doctrine contradicts our whole system of theology; for we do not believe in any efficiency of man in his own salvation. But as I have just said, there must be something else upon which my Church bases its doctrine of immersion; and that must be on the meaning of the original Greek word for baptism, and on the Word of God itself.

JAMES.—Very well, Brother Robert, we will now turn our attention to those portions of Scripture in which baptism is mentioned, and see whether they directly specify a *mode* of baptism, or whether a *mode* can be logically deduced from them. Let us do this just as we have been looking into the Scriptures up to this time, not as scholars, but prayerfully and as business men, and men of common sense. Permit me to observe, that, already it has been shown, on the authority of my minister, and that of Liddell and Scott and a German Greek scholar, these three last, mark you, Greek, English and German Lexicographers, that the original word to which *baptism* is given as the English form, does not always mean to immerse—that it means also “to pour,” “to sprinkle,” “to dip.” Bear in mind, also, that it has already been shown from the Scriptures, that Christian baptism was intended to represent, or symbolize the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and that the Holy Ghost baptizes by “coming upon,” “falling on,” or being “poured upon” the subject of his operations; and, hence, in order to represent the baptism of the

Holy Ghost, the water must come upon, fall on, or be poured upon the subject in Christian baptism. But now to the law and testimony. The first Scripture to be examined is Matt. iii. 6. Please read, Brother Robert, and tell me what you think of it.

ROBERT.—“And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.” Now, Brother James, my hopes revive, for certainly this passage teaches immersion. You notice they were baptized *in* Jordan. Immersion here is plain enough.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, contain and restrain yourself a little. Do not let your hopes and your zeal run away with your good sense. Let us meditate on this a little. I know that immersers lay much stress on the word “in” here; but, to my mind, the word indicates nothing definite as to the *mode* of John’s baptism. I called my pastor’s attention to this word “in” here, and in other places, and he informed me that the Greek word of which “in” is given as the translation, means also “at,” “on,” or “by.” You, and others of your sect, claim that the word “in” certainly indicates immersion; but, to my mind, and any other unjaundiced mind, it does not, with certitude, so do. There is certainly a possibility of one going *into* water without going *under* it, in the sense of immersion. Now, unless it can be shown that *into* and *under* mean the same thing, it certainly cannot be shown that “in” and immersion mean the same thing. The fact is, that neither sprinklers nor immersers can find anything in the language quoted to sustain their practice—the language contains nothing to indicate *mode*. The simple statement is, that “John baptized in Jordan.” Conclusions, therefore, from this language are merely gratuitous.

ROBERT.—Well, Brother James, I confess I was a little premature and sanguine in this case. But there is another



portion of Scripture in connection with John's baptism that certainly teaches he immersed. It is John iii. 23, and I will read it: "And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salem, because there was much water there." You know, it does not require much water to sprinkle or pour, and when we are told that John went to Enon, because there was much water there, it is very evident he immersed, as, otherwise, he would not need much water.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I have no doubt but what you say is very satisfactory to yourself and other immersers with you, but you do not present the shadow of an argument. In the first place you go beyond what is written when you say John "*went there to baptize.*" The Bible does not say that. It simply says he was baptizing there when a certain other thing occurred, because there was much water there. Now, I think I can see a good reason why John should stop to preach at such places as had much water, and at those only. If the crowd listening to him at Enon was, in size, anything to be compared to that which went to him at Jordan, much water was needed. Where do ministers of the present day hold their camp meetings? Is it not where there is much water? Certainly so. But why do they do this? Is it because the ministers themselves need much water in their work? No, but because the people who attend need much water. Just because John stopped at a place where there was much water, one need not infer that *he* needed much for his work. But the crowd needed a great deal who went to listen to him, and I presume that the same impulse moved John that moves the ministers of the present day to seek a camping place where nature abundantly furnishes her refreshing fluid. But in the passage before us the expression "much water" conveys no idea as to the *depth* of the water at Enon; and we know it requires consid-



erable depth to immerse. But if you will look into that Bible dictionary on the shelf at your hand, you will see that the word Enon itself gives us the meaning of the word "much." You notice that it means "many springs." The name Enon was given to the place because there were many springs there, so that the word "much" is but a repetition of the idea contained in the word Enon. My minister informs me that the original word which defines the water in the text is "polla," and means many—a polygon is a figure of many sides—Enon was a place of many springs. So that the expression "much water," or "many springs" does not necessarily convey the idea of immersion. *You* have not, but many of your people do ask the question, and that in the way of an argument, too: "Why did John go to Enon, where there was *much* water, if he did not go to immerse?" It is hard to perceive the quality of an argument in this. It might be answered by asking another question equally argumentative: "If John was an immerser, why did he leave Jordan?" The one is about as good an argument as the other; but both questions show a mind very much in need of something to lean upon; they very much resemble a man grasping at a straw to save himself from drowning. There is nothing in the language that states the fact of John baptizing at either Enon or Jordan, that indicates the *mode* of his baptism; and I would pass on from it, were it not for an incident that transpired at Enon, to which I call your attention, and which you immersers have failed apparently to notice.

ROBERT.—I did not notice anything particular in the third chapter of John but the fact that John was baptizing at Enon because there was much water there.

JAMES.—I did not think you noticed the incident to which I am about to call your attention. You immersers are not in the habit of noticing anything that does

not appear to strengthen your doctrine. How readily you caught on to the word "in" and to the expression "much water" in connection with John's preaching and baptizing at Jordan and Enon; but you did not notice, nor have I ever heard a Baptist allude to, the incident now before my mind. Please read John iii. 22, 23, 24, 25.

ROBERT.—"And after these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them. And John also was baptizing at Enon, near to Salem, because there was much water there, and they came and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying." Brother James, I can see nothing particularly striking in this Scripture beyond the fact of John baptizing.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I did not expect that you would. Yet the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle John, is careful to bring to our notice an incident which you Baptists have never thought of sufficient importance to notice. The Holy Spirit tells us that a controversy or discussion arose between John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. Notice that 25th verse. Now, would you be kind enough to tell me what you suppose gave rise to that discussion between the Jews and some of John's disciples on the subject of purification?

ROBERT.—Why, Brother James, I had never thought about that discussion. But, looking the matter right straight in the face, I think it must have been something in John's baptism that gave rise to it. It was at the time John was baptizing in Enon the discussion on purification came up.

JAMES.—Just so, Brother Robert, but why do you express yourself with such hesitancy, as though you were afraid of going too far, or of what was coming next? It

is very evident from the language before us that, whatever idea John's disciples attached to his baptism, the Jews connected it with purification. And that it did have reference to purification is evident from the 3rd chapter of Matthew. He preached repentance and amendment of life, and baptized on the promise of this amendment. This amendment was legal in its character, and their confession of sins and submission to John's baptism indicated their readiness to accept the kingdom of heaven, which he proclaimed to be at hand. The baptism which John administered must therefore have been in line with his preaching. This is the only natural way to account for the discussion on purification, for it was his baptism that gave rise to it.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I do not think there is any room for argument on the point you bring up. Evidently it was John's baptism that gave rise to the discussion. I do not know what use you are going to make of this, but I cannot suppress my own spontaneous judgment. I admit that it must have been John's baptism that gave rise to the discussion on purification.

JAMES.—Very well, Brother Robert, you have only acted in this case as you, or any other noble-minded man must act. It was John's baptism that brought the subject up, and this baptism must have been after the manner of Jewish purification. Now, if we can find the manner of Jewish purification, I think we shall have found the *mode* of John's baptism. Let us search for this. Please read Lev. viii. 10, 11; Lev. xiv. 7, 51; Lev. xvi. 14; Num. viii. 7; Num. xix. 18.

ROBERT.—Lev. viii. 10, 11: "And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle, and all that was therein, and sanctified them. And he sprinkled there-of upon the altar seven times." Lev. xiv. 7, 51: "And he

shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and he shall pronounce him clean. And he shall take the cedar wood, and the hysop, and the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird, and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times." Lev. xvi. 14: "And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat eastward, and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his fingers seven times." Num. viii. 7: "And thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them; sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave their flesh, and let them wash their clothes and so make themselves clean." Num. xix. 17, 18: "And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: and a clean person shall take the hysop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one dead, or a grave." Ezek. xxxvi. 25: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you."

JAMES.—Now, Brother Robert, from the passages of Scripture which you have read, what do you think was the *mode* of Jewish legal purification?

ROBERT.—Evidently the legal form of Jewish purification was by sprinkling.

JAMES.—Can you perceive any connection of idea between this and John's baptism, taking into account the discussion between John's disciples and the Jews about purifying?

ROBERT.—I see the point you make, Brother James, and admit it is a strong one. John's disciples and the other Jews discussed the subject of purification; and this discussion evidently arose from John's baptism.



JAMES.—Precisely so, Brother Robert, and you remember that John baptized on confession of sins and promise of amendment of life. What is meant by this amendment of life? Is it not simply a moral purification of character? Certainly so! And what is the form of cleansing? Ezek. xxxvi. 25, answers the question in plain and simple language: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." John performs his baptism, or legal purification by sprinkling. The Jews attached peculiar cleanliness to running water, and hence used it in their legal purifications. It was on this account that John preached and baptized where there was running water. If we take into consideration, in this connection, the baptism of Christ, we will get more light upon the subject.

ROBERT.—I do want to hear what you have to say about the baptism of Christ. If you can get sprinkling into that baptism, I think I will have to yield the controversy.

JAMES.—Well, we will examine it with some care. But it is getting late now, and we will postpone our examination of it until you can come again. Let us part for the night and think over what has already come before us. Good-night.

On the following evening Robert presented himself as before, and they again took up the study of the Bible on the subject of baptism.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I have been looking into the baptism of our Saviour, and I must say that I have experienced a good deal of satisfaction in the thought that his immersion is so clearly shown that you must admit it. In our past examination of the Bible you removed a good many of our landmarks; but I feel that this one stands secure against all assaults. That our Saviour was immersed is, I think, beyond controversy.



JAMES.—Unless John changed his mode of baptism in the case of Christ from that of the multitude, I think the controversy is still on, Brother Robert, unless you yield that sprinkling is Bible baptism. But I am glad to see you so cheerful, and wish to assure you that I have no disposition whatever to undermine your confidence. You are aware that it was your kind intention to show me my error on the subject of baptism that brought us together to study God's Word, and not from any disposition on my part to undermine your faith. Whatever may be the final outcome of our study of the Scriptures as to baptism, I feel assured we will both be benefitted by our conferences and study of the Word. Let us now look into that portion which tells us of the baptism of our Saviour. Please read Matthew, third chapter, beginning at the 13th verse.

ROBERT.—“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me. And Jesus answering, said unto him. Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Brother James, that must have been a grand sight. I have read this many times before, but have never been so impressed with the seriousness and grandeur of the spectacle as now. In my imagination, I can see the water sparkle like diamonds as it drops from his hair and garments when the light, brighter than that of the sun, falls upon him as he comes up out of the water, and I can almost hear the voice say, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

How the people must have stood in wonder as they gazed upon him.

JAMES.—Yes, Brother Robert, this incident and scene is one of the most sublime and impressive to be found in the whole Word of God. As we read of the garden of Eden, our imagination is aroused to behold a scene in which nature is exposed in her grandest manifestations. The sun shines upon it in all his glory, and for a season no cloud mars the beauty of the prospect. But as we gaze, and before we have time to give expression to our wonder and admiration, a dark, dark cloud settles upon it and shuts it from our view; and a feeling of awe lays hold upon us; and a chilling voice sounds in our ears—"sin and death, sin and death." But when we contemplate this scene at Jordan we feel that, somehow, it has much to do with that in Eden—that it raises the dark cloud that has been so oppressive, so killing to the children of Adam; and that now the day-spring from on high has visited us, and shines upon us in all his effulgence and glory. Instead of the awe-inspiring cry of "sin and death, sin and death" sounding in the ears of the human family, the voice of the Son of God cries out in loving intonations: "righteousness and life, righteousness and life." But it detracts from the sublimity of the incident, and emasculates the great work to which Jesus Christ has set himself, to give to his *baptism* no higher aim than that of initiating a *mode* of administering the rite.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I feel, with you, that this baptism was not the central object in the scene before us—that the water baptism was a mere incident in the background of the picture, and few of us, I fear, have been able to discover its true purpose and meaning.

JAMES.—This portion of Scripture is so full of meaning, and I feel so keenly my own inadequacy to unfold it

to you even as I myself see it, I think it would be well for us to seek divine aid in our investigation of it. The Lord most graciously says to us in his holy Word: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." Brother Robert, let us seek God's help as we peruse his Word, so we may get at its true meaning. Lead us in prayer to this end.

After prayer, James continued.

JAMES.—You notice, Brother Robert, that Jesus teaches here that his *baptism* was a matter of righteousness—righteousness on the part of both John and himself. "It becometh *us*," he says, "to fulfill all righteousness." Righteousness, you know, is a forensic term—it is used in connection with law. A man was called a righteous man when he kept the law. Evidently, then, the Saviour refers to some law to which his baptism at the hands of John would conform; and John apparently understands at once the attitude Jesus assumes; for as soon as he speaks of righteousness, he baptized him, although he had just refused to do it. Now, the question is, what was this law to which Christ referred, and to which his baptism would conform?

ROBERT.—Brother James, I suppose the law to which Christ referred is in the Old Testament, and I must acknowledge that I do not know much about the Old Testament. Indeed, I thought the Old Testament was done away with when Christ came. At any rate, I never thought it had much to do with baptism. I cannot tell what law, nor where the law is to be found, to which Christ refers.

JAMES.—I am afraid you do not stand alone in your views of the Old Testament, and am sorry the idea is so prevalent that it has been done away with. If the Old Testament has been done away with, it has not been by God's

command. Christ says he "came to fulfill the law and the prophets," and he quotes the Old Testament all through his preaching. The Apostles preached much from the Old Testament, and Paul says: "All Scripture is given by inspiration." But before proceeding to the law to which Christ referred, I call your attention to a matter which is but seldom spoken of, but which, to my mind, throws considerable light upon what is called the baptism of Christ. Had you ever noticed that Christ did not present himself for baptism until he was about thirty years of age? See Luke iii. 23. Now, why is the Holy Spirit careful to make Luke mention this apparently insignificant fact?

ROBERT.—I really do not know; I had never thought about it. Indeed, Luke says so little about the baptism of Christ that he is very seldom referred to at all on the subject. I do not think I have ever heard Luke quoted when baptism was under discussion. But as you have called my attention to this matter, all I can say is, that he could not have gone to John at an earlier age, because John had only lately commenced preaching.

JAMES.—Just so, but then, I might ask you why John had not commenced preaching five or ten years before? He was the special messenger of God, sent to prepare the way for his Son. He, himself, must have been about thirty years of age, when he commenced preaching, for he had been preaching but a short while when Jesus came to him for baptism. Now, here are two men, men of special importance in the sight of God and in the world; men with special missions pertaining to heaven and heavenly things, and to the eternal interests of the human family—men, indeed, upon whom were suspended even the possibility of a glorious eternity to any of the children of men. And yet they withhold their message until they



are about thirty years of age. Again, I ask the question, why did they do this? Why did John not commence calling the people to repentance when he was a young man of twenty or twenty-five years of age? At that age, his mind was strong and vigorous, and the people were expecting something wonderful to occur. And why did Jesus, when he was twenty or twenty-five years of age, spend five or ten more years in the carpenter's shop, when he could have been performing such beneficent work as curing diseases and forgiving sins? when he could have brought such glorious sunshine into the darkened and sin-laden souls of so many men. Ah! Brother Robert, the answer to this can only be found in the language of our Saviour—"thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." John was a priest by lineal descent; Christ was a priest by special appointment, but before either of them could enter upon the duties of their priestly office, they must submit to the *law* pertaining to that office, and one law was that they should be thirty years of age. This is the secret of the whole matter. Read Num. iv. 2, 3, 46, 47.

ROBERT.—"Take of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi after their families, by the house of their fathers. From thirty years old and upward, even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. All those that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the chief of Israel numbered, after their families, and after the house of their fathers. From thirty years old and upward, even until fifty years old, every one that came to do the service of the ministry, and the service of the burden in the tabernacle of the congregation."

JAMES.—These Scriptures show at what age the Levites were to enter upon the active work of the ministry, and the manner of their consecration to the work, you know,



was by the anointing with oil and sprinkling of pure water; Lev. viii. 30 and Num. viii. 7. The moral law did not require water to be applied to persons for any purpose, neither did the civil law of the Jews. No part of the ceremonial law required the application of water to any person at thirty years of age as a religious ordinance, except that which required the priests to be thus set apart to their office. These were to serve from thirty years of age and upward. But before any of them could legally engage in officiating as priests, they must observe the law of their consecration. This law stipulated that they must be "sprinkled with pure water and anointed with oil." Hence Jesus, of the tribe of Judah, a priest by divine appointment and right, but without priestly descent, a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, went to John, his forerunner, and a priest by lineal descent, when he was about thirty years of age, and demanded to be set apart to his priestly office according to the law, by sprinkling and anointing. John performed his part by sprinkling water upon him, and God performed his part by anointing him with the Holy Ghost. And thus the law was observed by both John and Christ.

ROBERT.—Well, Brother James, you have certainly presented this matter to me in a new light. I have never heard any of our Baptist ministers explain this matter of Christ's age when he went to John for baptism. True, I had read that portion of Luke in which his age is stated, but it had never made any particular impression on my mind. But as you present the case, his age supplies the key to his baptism, and entirely changes its form and import. If you are right, and I cannot prove that you are wrong, it follows that Christ was baptized by sprinkling and not by immersion. This I must admit unless something stronger than anything I have yet been taught or the Bible indicates, is brought against it.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, your readiness to admit the truth when you perceive it is very commendable, and saves us a great deal of time. You know, you started out to show me the scripturalness of immersion, and thus lead me to submit to it as Christian baptism; but I think that, up to the present we have seen but little immersion in the Bible. You admit that if my reasoning is correct, and you say you cannot refute it, that Christ was sprinkled and not immersed. Now, that is just what I believe, and that is what the great Presbyterian Church believes, and what all Pedobaptists believe, and they form at least nine-tenths of the Christian world. But let us go a little further into this matter. You notice, there is nothing in the Scripture that records the fact of Christ's baptism to indicate that the *mode* of *his* baptism differed from that of the multitude. Hence, we conclude that, if John baptized by sprinkling, this mode would bring the act in line with the discussion on purification between John's disciples and the Jews.

ROBERT.—Brother James, although I believe you have logically deduced from Scripture that John's mode of baptism was by sprinkling, yet the idea of immersion still clings to my mind, even in the face of my convictions. Here the Bible says that Jesus, after his baptism, "went up straightway out of the water." Now, why did he go into the water if he was only sprinkled?

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I know it is a most difficult matter to free the mind from pre-conceived opinions and the impressions made by early instruction, and I sympathize with you in your present mental condition. We have just learned that the Jews attached a peculiar cleansing power to running water. Now, at the time of our Saviour's advent, the Jewish mind was greatly agitated in reference to the promised Messiah. When John came

preaching repentance and proclaiming the near approach of the "kingdom of heaven," the people flocked in multitudes to hear him. Those who professed repentance were baptized, and, as they had peculiar views of running water, I can see a motive for those who were baptized to go down into it for that purpose. In that position it would be easier for John to dip hysop in the water and sprinkle them while standing in it. My impressions, as to the truth of this, are greatly strengthened and confirmed by the many portions of Scripture that refer to sprinkling as a means of cleansing. In the 51st Psalm, and 7th verse, David says: "Purge me with hysop, and I shall be clean." In Ezekiel we read, "Then shall I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean." And Peter speaks of the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." These and many other passages teach that sprinkling was the common symbol of cleansing. And, as I have said, it would be easier for John, and the quicker method, for both to go down into the water to be sprinkled with hysop, as their garments did not reach fully to their feet, and their feet were bare, or only had sandals on. In this way it could be very truthfully said they "came up out of the water." But there are a few things in your doctrine and practice which spring out of the baptism of Christ that I want to notice, and which appear to me to be inconsistent. You Baptists, or immersers, will not permit a sprinkler to sit with you at the Lord's Supper, to partake of that precious feast with you. Why is this?

ROBERT.—Because we think no one should partake of the Lord's Supper but members of the Church, and one cannot become a member of the Church but by baptism; and as our Church believes that immersion alone is Christian baptism, we cannot allow Pedobaptists to take the Lord's Supper with us because they have not been baptized.

JAMES.—That sounds reasonable, Brother Robert, and if I understand you, you not only make immersion the initiatory rite, or door into the Church, but you make it also the test of Christian standing.

ROBERT.—I doubt whether I understand you thoroughly. If you mean that we believe that no one can be a Christian but those who submit to immersion, you are mistaken. My Church does not teach that, and if it did I would not believe it, for I believe there are many Christians who do not believe in immersion.

JAMES.—Well, suppose that a number of these many Christians agree to combine together to build a house to worship in, and suppose they get a minister to preach to them, and that they use the same Bible that you Baptists use, and suppose they find in that Bible a form for their spiritual government, and also that the Lord instituted a feast and ordered it continued, and that in obedience to this they observe this feast, which is called the Lord's Supper, are they not, then, a part of God's Church?

ROBERT.—Your question is one of deep significance, and I fear to give it an answer without more thought. I think I can see where it will run to; but I ask you not to push it any further at present. I have never had occasion to think on many of the things you have brought up since we began our study, and with shame I confess ignorance on subjects with which I ought to have been familiar.

JAMES.—Well, Brother Robert, I respect your feelings and will not push that matter any further at present. But there is just an inconsistency about the Baptist Church of which many of you seem to be ignorant. To be in strict line with your doctrine, all who have been immersed are members of the Church. Campbellites have been immersed, therefore Campbellites are members of the Church. And yet you deny this, for you will not let them sit with you at the Lord's table.



ROBERT.—Yes, that is true, and there is an apparent inconsistency that I cannot reconcile. I suppose my Church has good reasons for doing as it does.

JAMES.—Well, to come back to the thought that presented itself to my mind a few minutes ago. You make immersion the door into the Church, do you not?

ROBERT.—Yes, we do not consider a person a member of the Church unless he has been immersed.

JAMES.—Now, what is it that admits us into the spiritual kingdom of God, or what is sometimes called the invisible Church, that Church, you know, which embraces all true believers here, as well as all those who have gone to heaven? Let us, for the sake of clearness, speak of the Church as visible and invisible. The visible, or that which is seen in the world and embraces all Christian denominations, or, as you Baptists like it best, just the Baptist Church, (for this is what you teach), and the invisible, or that which is set up in the heart, and which projects itself into eternity. This is not a very scientific distinction, but it will do for our purpose. I repeat the question—what is it that admits us into God's spiritual kingdom?

ROBERT.—Why, the Holy Ghost, to be sure, in what is called regeneration.

JAMES.—Here, then, is a wonderful thing. One is admitted into the invisible Church by an act of the Holy Ghost; but into the visible Church by immersion, which represents the burial and resurrection of Christ, a thing that has nothing to do with the baptism of the Holy Ghost. And yet the invisible Church is composed of believers now in the world, together with those who have passed over the river. Does this strike you as being in accord with the law of the fitness of things?

ROBERT.—Brother James, without a doubt, we must



give up the doctrine that Christian baptism represents the burial and resurrection of Christ.

JAMES.—Very well, Brother Robert, I hope you will find a more solid foundation for immersion to rest upon. But now I wish to ask you another question: Why do you exhort us sprinklers to follow Christ in baptism? That is, of course, in immersion?

ROBERT.—We do so not only that you may be baptized, but that you may become members of the Church.

JAMES.—I take it then, that Christ became a member of the Church by baptism. This must be so. If I am admitted into the Church by baptism, and to this end I am admonished to follow Christ, it must be that Christ was admitted into the Church by baptism. If, by following him in baptism, I become a member of the Church, that which makes me a member must have made him a member also, or why ask me to follow him in baptism to that end?

ROBERT.—Why, of course, Brother James, immersion has been the door into the Church since John's day. Surely the Bible is clear enough on that. Baptism is certainly the door into the Church.

JAMES.—Very well, Brother Robert, but I thought you Baptists were strong advocates of the doctrine that the Christian Church was not set up until the day of Pentecost. But, as you say that immersion is the door into the Church since John's day, I would like to know what was the door into the Church before John's day?

ROBERT.—O there was no real Church before John's day. The fact is, Brother James, you are getting me bewildered. I have never heard a man talk of this matter as you are doing. I seem to have lost all my sense.

JAMES.—Well, just possess your soul in patience for a little while and I will assist you, by the aid of God's Word,

out of your difficulties. The fact is, my good brother, you never give us Pedobaptists an opportunity to talk this matter of baptism over with you quietly. But you know you invited this discussion in order to convert me, and if I push you into a corner I am not to blame. But you see at once, that if there was no Church until John's day, and that if John received Christ into the Church, John must have set up the Church himself. Now, that, if true, was a nice proceeding on the part of John, and I am astonished that you Baptists, who are such sticklers for church order, should endorse him in it. Here we have Campbellites, who immerse like yourselves, but whom you will not admit to the Lord's table with you because they have not been immersed by a Baptist preacher, and consequently are not members of the Church; yet here is John, to whom you love to trace your origin, and whom you copy after, goes to work—and that without orders, too—and sets up a Church and receives Christ into it; and yet he himself is not a member of the Church; for there was none, you say, before his day. This is pretty conduct for Baptists to endorse. But the fact is, Brother Robert, that John denies setting up the Church, for his constant cry is, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And when Christ sent his disciples out to preach they were to proclaim "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And when Christ himself began to preach he said, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Now, we cannot say that a thing has come if it is only at hand—it may be very near, but it has not yet come. But Christ speaks very emphatically on the subject, and effectually closes the door of what is called the Christian Church against John, in Matt. xi. 11: "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of

heaven is greater than he." So you see that the privileges enjoyed in the Christian Church rise superior to those enjoyed by John the Baptist. Now, Brother Robert, in the face of all this, why do you call upon us to follow Christ in baptism? Christ's baptism did not and could not admit him into the Church, because, according to your own statement, there was no Church. John was not authorized to set up a Church, and he says himself that he did not do it. So that Christ's baptism did not admit him into the Church, for there was none, according to your own doctrine. Hence, there must have been good reasons of another kind for John's baptism; and these good reasons we have already found. There are very good reasons for you Baptists denying the existence of the Church previous to John's day, for, on the non-existence of the Church hinges your denial of the doctrine of infant baptism. Not that your denial establishes a fact, but it furnishes you with apparently satisfactory ground against the practice of infant baptism. But to return. The fact is, my brother, that you immersers seem to misconceive the Divine intention in sending John into the world, and you degrade his great and glorious work by attaching no higher object to it than that of introducing immersion. But I think it must be admitted, that, if immersion rests on no better foundation than that of John's baptism, it has not the shadow of a support. Our Saviour speaks in most exalted terms of John, no doubt having reference at the same time to the character of the *man* and the character of his *work*. Before Christ came it was considered a great and glorious privilege to be permitted to see the Saviour—the promised Messiah. Some made it the earnest prayer of their lives, and they rise into the highest strains of oratory, when they behold in vision the grandeur of his kingdom and the magnitude of his work.

When the child Jesus is brought into the temple, and Simeon turns his eyes upon him, his soul is filled with a divine ecstasy, and he exclaims in burning eloquence: Now, Lord, thou hast brought me to the very summit of the hill of privileges, "For mine eyes have beheld thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all the people. A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." John had the great privilege of closing an economy of law and priestly functions, and at the same time of proclaiming an economy of grace. He held in his hands, as it were, the keys to two great temples of worship. In one the people worshipped through laws and ceremonies and priestly intercession and blood of beasts; in the other the people present themselves before God with the incense of heart service through the blood of the Lamb of God. John closes for ever the old temple of types and shadows, and administers baptism in the old form by sprinkling water upon all who come to him, as a sign of their now vanishing legal purifications, and directs their mind to the Lamb of God, who would administer to them that baptism of the Holy Ghost which would cleanse their hearts indeed, and enable them to approach God, and worship in spirit and in truth. This view exalts John's mission and exhibits it as magnificently glorious. No wonder Christ classed him as the greatest of the prophets—he was great as the special messenger of God to prepare the way for his son, great as the last divinely appointed administrator of the sign of legal purification, and great as the inductor of Christ to his work of atonement by the sacrifice of himself—at once the sacrifice and the priest.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I am greatly impressed with the explanation you have given of John's work and mission. Heretofore I had not thought much about him



except in connection with immersion, and I must say that my thoughts of him, and what I have heard the ministers of my church say about him, were not calculated to give point to his work, or to raise him to any extent above the priests of his time, except in so far as his zeal rose above theirs.

JAMES.—I think mine is the only rational explanation that can be given of John—his preaching and his baptism. He stands at a point where two roads meet, a point that is denominated in Scripture as the “fulness of time.” One is the road of types and shadows; the other the road of grace through the cross. He closes up the old road and directs the people to the new. John’s baptism was the sign of the old legal purifications, and the sealing up of the old dispensation. The Jews were not acquainted with immersion as a religious act; they were familiar with sprinkling and divers washings; hence immersion would have conveyed no meaning to them. You see then, my brother, when you exhort me to follow Christ in baptism, you admonish me to leave that which is Christian baptism and turn to that which is not. Before I can consent to do that it must be shown that law can do more for me than grace. This would be taking a long step in the wrong direction. However the Jew might glory in an economy of *law*, we glory in that economy of *grace* which exemplifies itself in the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost, by whom we are united to Christ in our effectual calling. It is to honor this great work of the Holy Spirit, and show it forth in symbolic act we practice Christian baptism, and not to symbolize the act of men in the burial of Christ. But let us examine the instances of Christian baptism recorded in the Scriptures, and see whether they teach immersion, or whether immersion can reasonably be deduced from them. The first Christian



baptism on record is that on the day of Pentecost. But, perhaps we had better defer our examination of this until to-morrow night.

ROBERT.—Very well, Brother James, we will separate now. Good-night.

On the following evening Robert went again to the home of James and both retired to the usual place of study.

JAMES.—The first Christian baptism is recorded in the second chapter of Acts. Please read from the 36th to the 41st verses inclusive; they not only tell us of the fact of baptism, but what led to it.

ROBERT.—“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now, when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

JAMES.—Brother Robert, what do you make of these baptisms? Is immersion mentioned in these Scriptures? Could any one who had never heard of immersion infer from the Scriptures you have read that those people were immersed?

ROBERT.—The Bible does not mention immersion in

this case, but the very fact that they were baptized shows they were immersed.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I am astonished that you fall back on that old and worn-out proposition. It has already been shown from English and German-Greek Lexicographers that the original word of which baptism is the English form means “to dip,” “to pour,” “to sprinkle,” as well as to immerse. In fact, we have already seen that the idea of immersion as baptism in the New Testament is effectually excluded. It is excluded in that, the Scriptures teach, that baptism was intended to represent the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and must therefore be performed by sprinkling or pouring. Now, these points have long ago been settled and disposed of, both logically and scripturally. Why, then, bring them up at this late day, when they have no weight whatever, except it may be to prolong discussion. I have always observed that the person who has the weak side in discussion reverts again and again to the very thing that is denied, and tries to use it as proof. I deny that immersion is Christian baptism, and the Scriptures sustain me in my contention, as we have already seen from twenty-one passages. It is therefore childish for you to say that those persons on the day of Pentecost were immersed, just because they were baptized. On my part, I might say, and with great truth, as has already been shown, that the fact that they were baptized proves they were sprinkled. You will bear in mind, my dear brother, that the object before us at the present time is *not* to show *how* these parties were baptized—we have already seen that the water was sprinkled or poured upon them—but to see whether those portions of Scripture in which baptism is mentioned *positively state a mode of baptism*, or whether a mode can logically be deduced from them. You Baptists claim that immer-

sion is clearly taught in the Scriptures, and our present effort is to be directed to see whether this is so. If immersion is as clearly taught as you affirm, we should certainly be able to see it. The portion of Scripture you have read from the second chapter of Acts, is the record of the first Christian baptisms, and it is very evident from the language used in relating the incidents of that historic day, that immersion is not even remotely intimated. Peter is the prominent character of the day. He assumes the position of official spokesman. The people had congregated, *en masse*, because of the wonderful work of the Holy Spirit in bestowing the gift of tongues. There were assembled at Jerusalem people from Europe, Asia, Africa and the islands of the Mediterranean Sea, representing different languages and dialects. The Apostles were enabled to preach to the people so that every man could hear the Gospel in his own tongue. There was no occasion for, nor does the record state, that any but the Apostles preached. There was no necessity for any besides the Apostles to preach, for twelve languages and dialects would reach all the geographical territory represented. The Holy Spirit worked mightily upon the people, convicting them of sin, especially the great sin of crucifying the Lord of glory; and they enquired diligently of Peter and the rest of the Apostles, what they should do to be saved. Peter replied in the language you have read, and it is very evident that immersion is neither mentioned nor indicated. In the language of the Scripture: "repent and be baptized," there is absolutely nothing in favor of immersion, while in the *circumstances* there is very much against it. I know that you immersers claim that the one hundred and twenty disciples mentioned in the first chapter of Acts, engaged with the twelve Apostles in immersing the three thousand converts of that day. But you are

apt to claim a great deal more than is written. There is nothing in the record to show that the one hundred and twenty disciples took any active part in the transactions of the day. Indeed, the one hundred and twenty disciples are not once mentioned after the election of Matthias to the Apostolate. Any affirmation concerning them after this recorded fact is merely guess work. If I were to deny their presence in the upper room when the Holy Spirit was poured out, you would experience some trouble in proving the contrary. Hence, to say that the one hundred and twenty disciples assisted the twelve Apostles in immersing the three thousand is merely an affirmation of you immersers—it has no Scripture to sustain it. There is nothing in the Scriptures to indicate that the one hundred and twenty disciples took any active part in the transactions of the day.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I like to hear you talk; you are very instructive; but, at the same time, you are very destructive—of my theories. Our ministers have always said that the one hundred and twenty disciples helped the Apostles to immerse the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, and I took it for granted that it was so. But I see now there is no real ground for this—it is merely assumption.

JAMES.—Just so, Brother Robert, I am glad you see these things as they are. Another thing that seems to be overlooked by you immersers, generally, in connection with the baptisms on the day of Pentecost is, that the Bible does not say anything as to the *time* when the preaching ceased and the baptizing commenced. The impression you strive to make is, that the preaching continued but a short while, and that the baptizing took up the greater portion of the day. Now, there is nothing in the record to this effect. The fact is, that it was through



the preaching the people were led to believe. The preaching, therefore, was the prominent feature, and in all probability, consumed the major portion of the time, and the baptizing but a little while. It was during the *day* the three thousand were added, and not during the afternoon and night. In calculating the time needed to immerse the three thousand persons on the day of Pentecost, another feature of the occasion is generally overlooked. It is spoken of in such a way as to make the impression that only men were baptized, whereas Joel says, that the Spirit was to be poured upon females as well as males—it was not upon the old men and young men only; but upon the handmaids and daughters also. Now, every one knows that it would take much more time to immerse females than males, especially in the East, where the person of the female was guarded with such jealous care. On this account, it is altogether improbable that three thousand men and women could have been immersed in the short portion of the day left for baptizing. But this is not the only nor the greatest obstacle to immersion on this memorable occasion; there is another greater still. You are aware there was no river running through Jerusalem—that the people depended for their water supply on pools in the city, and these pools were not open and surrounded by steps; but, on the contrary, were covered and had only a narrow way of approach. This idea is illustrated in the case of the impotent man at the pool of Siloam. This is not only so, but the city was comparatively circumscribed in its area, being surrounded by walls. Hence the pools must have been few and comparatively close together. Now, if you will bear in mind that it was in this same city the rulers of the Jews combined against Jesus, and through false witnesses had him condemned and crucified only fifty short days before Pentecost—mark



you, not two months—you will see the improbability of these same rulers allowing his disciples to pollute the water supply of the city by immersing three thousand men and women in the pools.

ROBERT.—But you know, Brother James, there were some pools that were used for bathing—the pool of Siloam, for instance—and these three thousand might have been immersed in them.

JAMES.—No, Brother Robert, I do not know that there were any pools set apart for such a purpose as what we call bathing, in the way of immersion. The Jews had different ideas of that which were called washings to ours of bathing. But even granting that there were some pools set apart in the city for what we call bathing, they must necessarily have been few. It would take ten pools and three hundred persons to the pool to immerse three thousand persons. I confess that, to take in the idea of immersion on the day of Pentecost, all things considered, requires greater mental effort than I am competent to exert. To say that these rancorous rulers, in this city of persecution—these despisers and haters of Jesus of Nazareth and all connected with him—would sit quietly by, and see the water of their city polluted by the immersion of three thousand men and women, his followers at that, is beyond anything that has ever come to my knowledge. But the supposition of immersion in this case casts a reflection upon the cause of religion, and upon the Apostles of Jesus Christ themselves, for they must have known that the immersion of so many people would pollute the water; and to do such a thing, especially in a place where water was so precious, would be a great sin, and, on their part, not one of ignorance. To immerse three thousand men and women in one, or two, or three, or four pools in the short portion of the day left for baptizing would be a

physical impossibility; and to bring the one hundred and twenty disciples to the assistance of the Apostles would increase the difficulty, for it would increase the number of pools needed, and thus increase the area of pollution. But in the case of sprinkling or pouring, the baptisms could have been performed in a very short time by the twelve Apostles, and that, too, without injury to the water supply, and without giving offense. But, as we have found that water baptism was intended to symbolize the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the evidence is that the three thousand of Pentecost were sprinkled. One thing is evident, and that is, the language of the record conveys no idea of immersion.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I am unable to controvert anything you have said in reference to the baptisms on Pentecost. There is nothing to show that those converts went out of the city to be baptized, and the Bible does say they were all baptized on the same day of the preaching, and it does not appear reasonable that the rulers of the Jews would allow the disciples of one whom they so thoroughly hated, and whom they had crucified so short a time before, to use the pools of the city for the immersion of three thousand men and women, who were leaving the established religion to take up with a sect that was thoroughly, and almost universally despised. I must acknowledge that immersion in this case, so far as I can see, must be given up.

JAMES.—I presume you see that if you yield immersion in one instance, you must yield it in all cases, unless you can show that the Apostles practiced more than one mode of baptism. But let us proceed to the investigation of the other instances of baptism. It is unnecessary to take up every instance of baptism mentioned in the Acts, for there are several of them of which nothing is given

but the mere fact of baptism, or baptizing—there is nothing connected with them to indicate *mode*, either of sprinkling or immersion. See Acts viii. 12, 13. But there is a baptism recorded in Acts viii. 38, 39, upon which you immersers lay great stress, and which you press into all your arguments on the subject. Let us look into it for a little and see what it is worth. Please read.

ROBERT.—“And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.”

JAMES.—Now, Brother Robert, what do you think of that baptism? Does the Bible say the eunuch was immersed? Is there anything to *show* that he was immersed?

ROBERT.—It appears to me that we have a clear case of immersion in this instance. We read “they both *went down into* the water,” and both *came up out of* the water.’ Is not this strong enough to convince you that the eunuch was immersed?

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I do think we have now before us one of the strongest arguments in the New Testament in favor of immersion. It is one, too, that you immersers use for all it is worth.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I am glad we have got to the point where you admit immersion. And this baptism is worth a great deal if it proves that the eunuch was immersed. I think you will admit that.

JAMES.—Yes, I will admit that it is worth a great deal if it proves immersion. But you go too far when you say we have got to the point where *I* admit immersion. Let us examine this case a little. Bear in mind that your doctrine is, that immersion itself—or the going *under* the water—is baptism. Am I correct in this?

ROBERT.—Certainly so. The immersion, or going *under* the water, is baptism.

JAMES.—Well, now, look at the 38th verse, and look at it closely. Please read it.

ROBERT.—“And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and Philip baptized him.”

JAMES.—Now, what do you see in that language, Brother Robert? Does it say that Philip put the eunuch *under* the water?

ROBERT.—Brother James, I can see nothing but immersion in it—they both went down *into* the water, and they both came *up out* of it.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I am a little disappointed in you. Up to this time you have been able to get the teaching of the Bible pretty well, and have shown an ingenious mind. But now you are permitting yourself to be carried away with the idea of immersion to the exclusion of everything else. Let me direct your attention to the language of the Scriptures. You perceive there are two things, two acts, brought to our notice in this 38th verse. One is *going down into the water*; the other is the act of *baptizing*. It was not the act of going down into the water that constituted the baptism; for the baptism was performed *after* they went down into the water, and there is nothing to show that the eunuch was put *under* the water when being baptized. In immersion the person is put *under* the water; going into the water is not enough, he must go *under* it. Bear in mind that it is not on the *fact* of *baptism* you immersers base your argument in this case; but on the expressions—“they both went *down into* the water,” and “came *up out* of the water.”

ROBERT.—I see the point you make, and must acknowledge there is something to it. The grammatical construc-



tion of the sentences, which record the fact of baptism, shows very clearly that two things occurred, first, going down into the water, and, second, the baptism. But what will you make of it?

JAMES.—I do not know that I will make very much of it. The facts in the case just simply remove it from you as an argument in favor of immersion. It appears a very little thing, and yet it proves that the going down *into* the water was not baptism; the baptism was performed after the going down into the water, and there is nothing, absolutely nothing, to show that the eunuch was immersed. This case is one of your strong forts, you know, and already it has been destroyed by four little words, “and he baptized him.” But let us look a little further into this baptism. The expressions upon which immersion are based in this instance are “into” and “out of”—“both went down into the water, and came up out of the water.” This language is all that could possibly lead to the idea of an immersion, and I think it must be granted that it would require a good deal of previous instruction on the subject to get immersion into it. If I am simply told that a man went down into water, there is no necessity for me to imagine that he went under it, or was immersed in the common meaning of the term. Going into water conveys no idea as to degree. It simply states the fact of being in it. One might be in water so far as to cover the soles of his shoes, or his knees, or his waist, and yet it could not be said of such an one that he was immersed. If I go into water to the depth of my shoes tops, and another goes in to his waist, it can be as truthfully said of me that I went into the water, as of the other that he went into it. The only difference in the case is one of degree; the one was a little deeper than the other, but both were in the water. Now, as to the

case of Philip and the eunuch, the simple statement is made—"they both went down into the water;" that is all; and after going down into the water, Philip baptized him. There is nothing, then, in the expression "into" and "out of" that need lead to the idea of an immersion.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I must say that you have given this incident a different coloring from any it ever had to me before. Is it not strange that the ministers of my Church will harp upon this baptism as a proof of immersion, when, as you have clearly shown, and I now as clearly perceive, there is nothing in the Bible to show it was an immersion. Brother James, I am really ashamed of myself.

JAMES.—My brother, you need not blame yourself so much in this case; you are just as all others of your fellow immersers; you never really looked into this baptism before. The instrument you have played upon heretofore had only one string, and gave out only one sound—immersion. Into the water—immersion; out of the water—immersion.

It is frequently the *little* circumstances of a case that give it any importance, and the little things are frequently overlooked. The little things of this baptism were overshadowed by the great things "into the water"—immersion, "out of the water"—immersion. You went to this baptism with your mind running over with immersion; and hence could not see, and did not think of, anything else. You never thought that Philip and the eunuch could go down into the water without an immersion taking place; and you never noticed that it was *after* they went down into the water that Philip baptized him. This act of Philip was too small for you to observe. When you looked at this baptism, you had on the green glasses of immersion, and everything you saw looked

green. But let us examine this baptism a little more. It is a very interesting one. My minister informs me that the Greek word rendered "into" in this passage means "to," "on," or "by," as well as "into"—that the word is "eis," and the same word, "eis," is rendered "into" in Matt. v. 1. "And seeing the multitude, he went up *into* "eis" a mount; and when he was set, his disciples came unto him." Now, Brother Robert, what meaning would you give to the word "into" in connection with the mountain in this quotation? It seems that the word "into" in this case has the same meaning as the Greek word used in connection with the baptism of the eunuch. They both went down *into*—eis—the water; Christ went up *into*—eis—the mountain.

ROBERT.—You know, Brother James, that I make no pretensions to a knowledge of the Greek language, and so can make no explanation as to the specific or general meaning of a Greek word. But the word "into" is used in both instances; and, taking a common-sense view of the incident of our Saviour in connection with the mountain, it is evident he did not go *into* the mountain in the same sense as we think of an immersion—it did not cover him up on every side, as the water covers one in immersion. The sense evidently is, that the Saviour went up some distance on the mountain side and sat down, and taught the people from that elevated situation.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, you have taken a very sensible view of the mountain incident; but, as you acknowledge that the word "into" in that case does not mean, and cannot mean, *into* in the same sense as into the water, in immersion, why do you insist that, because the expression "into the water" is used in connection with baptism, that the eunuch must, therefore, have been immersed?

ROBERT.—Brother James, you present me to myself in

such a way as to make me ashamed of myself. It is humiliating to me to see myself as I really am. I courted this investigation on baptism, believing, in my vanity, that I was so thoroughly familiar with the Bible, and so fortified on immersion, that I would convince you of your error. But instead of this, you down me at every point, and leave me without an argument to oppose you. I greatly fear I went *to* the Bible *with* a doctrine and looked for proof to sustain it, and thought I found it on the very surface, instead of going to the Bible *for* my doctrine. In this way I have really injured myself, for I find that I am not only not able to oppose you, but unable to sustain myself.

JAMES.—Well, Brother Robert, do not be too much cast down. I think you have done about as well as any immerser could do. There may be some—I have no doubt there are—who would not yield to the truth as readily as you do—some who would endeavor to use sophistry for argument; but as to a sound refutation of the truths we have brought to the surface, their efforts would be as fruitless as yours. You have done very well—considering your side of the question. But, back again to the matter before us. You see that the statement, “went down into the water,” and “came up out of the water” does not teach immersion.

ROBERT.—I can see very clearly now that going down into the water does not necessarily teach immersion. But how is the *mode* of baptism to be settled in this case? The eunuch was baptized in some way, and it looks like we ought to be able to tell how.

JAMES.—Your remark is a very sensible one, Brother Robert. But if we cannot discover *how* the eunuch was baptized, it ought to teach you immersers a good lesson. You should not be so arrogant and insistent on a *mode*—



your mode—as you are; because there is a possibility, as well as a very great probability, that the eunuch was not immersed. Let us look into the case a little more minutely. You remember, in the case of John the Baptist, we found a sidelight that relieved the darkness, and enabled us to discover the mode of his baptism. This sidelight came to us partly through the discussion on purification between John's disciples and the Jews. Through that discussion and the baptism of Christ, we found that John baptized by sprinkling. Now, in the case of the eunuch, we may find a sidelight that will help us settle the question as to his baptism.

ROBERT.—Well, proceed, Brother James; I await your questions and explanations with a good deal of anxiety. You bring up such unexpected things that one never knows what is to come next.

JAMES.—There is nothing so very deep in either my questions or explanations. It seems to me they lie upon the surface, or very near to it, and would naturally present themselves to a mind honestly seeking the truth of God's Word. I think, my brother, with all due respect to you and your fellow immersers, that the trouble is not with me, nor with those like me, who believe in sprinkling or pouring, but with yourselves. You take too contracted a view of God's Word in those passages which treat of baptism. If there seems to be the slightest coloring of immersion in any statement, you magnify it; you dwell upon it; you embrace and hug it—not the Scripture statement, but immersion—until that idea obscures and dominates everything else. You adopt an excellent plan to get a distorted view of Scripture, and you succeed in getting distorted views. But let us get back to the eunuch and Philip. I wish to call your attention to the 36th verse of this 8th chapter of Acts. Please read it, Brother Robert.

ROBERT.—“And as they went on their way, they came to a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?”

JAMES.—Brother Robert, do you notice anything worthy of remark in that Scripture?

ROBERT.—No, there is nothing that particularly attracts my attention.

JAMES.—Does the idea not present itself that that particular water could not have been of any great magnitude, or the eunuch would not have had to call Philip's attention to it as he did? “See,” says he, “look, here is water.” In all probability it was but a little purling brook. But there is another thing in the language you have read of more significance than the quantity of water. You notice, I presume, that baptism is first mentioned by the eunuch. Philip had not said one word about baptism; he had never mentioned, never referred to it at all. Now, the question is, what gave rise to the idea of baptism in the eunuch's mind? Ideas do not come up spontaneously in the human mind; it requires something to call them forth. Now, what was it that gave rise to the idea of baptism in the eunuch's mind?

ROBERT.—Brother James, I do not know what gave rise to the idea of baptism in the eunuch's mind. The thought you present never came to me before, and I do not catch its significance. I suppose, however, he must have seen some baptisms, or had been reading about baptisms perhaps. It may have been that he was in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, or he may have witnessed some baptism elsewhere.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, I think your supposition carries with it the facts in the case. If he had found anything in the Scriptures he had been reading that corresponded with the baptisms, he, in all probability, had wit-

nessed in Jerusalem, the idea of baptism was very pertinent in his case. We are told distinctly that he was reading the prophecy of Isaiah when Philip came up to him. The quotation in the Acts is from Isaiah liii. 7, 8. Please read it, Brother Robert.

ROBERT.—“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth: he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.”

JAMES.—The pronoun “he” here gives us the key to the whole transaction. It was this word that induced the question of the eunuch in the 34th verse: “And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself or of some other man?” We must go further back in the prophecy to find the party to whom the word “he” refers. Please read Isaiah lii. 13, 14, 15.

ROBERT.—Behold my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee: his visage was marred more than any man; so shall he sprinkle many nations: the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider.”

JAMES.—Now, this servant is the party to whom Philip refers as Jesus, and whom he preaches to the eunuch. The prophet Isaiah informs us as to what Jesus would do, that “he would sprinkle many nations.” And Ezekiel informs us also what God promised to do—“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. A new heart will I give you.” Ezek. xxxvi. 25. This is

the key to the baptism of the eunuch. Philip preached Jesus to him from Isaiah, and Isaiah informed him that Jesus "would sprinkle many nations. In all probability, he had heard Peter preach on the day of Pentecost and witnessed some of the baptisms, and now that he is led to a true knowledge of the gospel through Philip, he asks if there is any good reason why he should not be baptized. Philip replied that there was not if he believed with all his heart. The eunuch immediately makes his profession of faith, short and clear cut, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;" and Philip baptized him. How did Philip baptize him? Certainly in the mode of God's baptizing, of which he had just read in Isaiah, and of which Ezekiel speaks, by sprinkling clean water upon him. I do not positively affirm that the eunuch was an eye witness of the baptisms in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost; I simply say that it was very probable, and that he had heard the Apostles preach there. The charge of Peter against the Jews, that they had crucified the Lord of glory, would not appeal to him so powerfully personally as it did to them, as he was from Ethiopia, in Africa. But the sermon and its effect upon the people must have made a deep impression on his mind, and prepared him to receive the gospel from Philip. And when the Holy Ghost opened his heart, it was but natural that he should desire to bear testimony to the power of the blood of Christ, by receiving Christian baptism at the hands of Philip. And Philip baptized him by sprinkling water upon him in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to correspond with God's way of baptizing by the Holy Ghost, as taught by Isaiah and Ezekiel.

ROBERT.—Brother James, your reasoning and explanation of this baptism is so clear and simple that I admire and admit its truth. It appeals to my mind with such



power and fitness that I cannot, even if I desired, find a basis for an argument against it. I have never heard any of the preachers of my Church reason upon the passages of Scripture which have engaged our attention thus far as you have done. In fact, they never reason at all on those passages of Scripture that treat of baptism. They *affirm* often enough that such and such an instance teaches immersion; but as to reasoning and elucidating, I have never heard them. I now see that the kind of education I have received from my preachers on the subject of baptism places me at a great disadvantage with you. I know that I should have studied for myself, and am much to blame that I did not, but I felt, as many of my fellow church members feel, I fear, that immersion was so clearly on the surface of Scripture, that all that was needed to be done was to say that it was there. In so far as I am able to judge, your reasoning and explanations are in strict correspondence with the Scriptures, and hence, whatever, under other circumstances, might have been the extent of my knowledge, I would have to admit the truth of your reasons and conclusions.

JAMES.—Very well, Brother Robert; I think your admissions may be charged, not so much to your lack of ability or knowledge, as your nobleness of mind to acknowledge the truth when you perceive it. But now, let us examine the other baptisms mentioned in Scripture, to see whether *they* teach immersion so clearly as immersers would have us believe. The next baptism is that of Paul. You will find it in the 9th chapter of Acts, and 18th verse. Please read.

ROBERT.—“And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.”

JAMES.—Can you see any immersion in that baptism, Brother Robert? If so, point it out.

ROBERT.—I do not see anything in the language to indicate immersion. But you see, we Baptists teach that nothing is baptism but immersion, and as Paul<sup>e</sup> was baptized, he must, of course, have been immersed, irrespective of what the Bible says, or does not say.

JAMES.—You Baptists have a short way of disposing of things. It is like this—we Baptists *say* a thing is *so*, and it *is* so, *because* we say it is so. This certainly is short and terse; and might do very well if everybody agreed with the Baptists. But you see, there is quite a respectable body of men who deny this, about nine-tenths of the Christian world, in fact, deny that nothing is baptism but immersion, and denying your premises, they must, of course, deny your conclusion. It is not true that nothing is baptism but immersion. You remember, it has already been brought to your notice that Greek-English and German Lexicographers say that the Greek word baptizo has not a fixed and invariable meaning—that it does mean “to dip,” “to sprinkle,” to “pour upon,” as well as to immerse. When a certain thing is affirmed as true, and another party denies the truth of the affirmation, it lies with the party who affirms to prove the truth of the affirmation. This is the course pursued in all cases of controversy. Take the courts of the country, for example. If a man is arrested and charged with a crime, it is for the prosecutor to prove the charge, and not with the man to prove his innocence. But you immersers pursue an entirely different plan. You affirm that nothing is baptism *but immersion*, and on this you affirm that all cases of baptism mentioned in Scripture were immersions, and then you call upon those who deny this to prove your affirmations untrue. This is reversing the order of things. But when we show that all the baptisms mentioned in Scripture were not immersions; that, in fact, *none* of them

were, the only argument you bring to bear upon this is: "Nothing is baptism but immersion, immersion alone is baptism." I do not think you need be astonished that such an argument as this does not meet with respect. But let us pursue our own plan and try to get the meaning of Scripture words from the Scriptures themselves. I think this will be a safe course to pursue. As to the baptism of Paul, I know you immersers do not push your doctrine to any great length in his case. Indeed, you but seldom refer to his case at all. I am willing to admit that immersion in his case was possible, as the Rivers of Abana and Pharpar were not so very far from Damascus; but the circumstances made it very improbable. If the possibilities and evidence were as strong in favor of immersion as the probabilities and circumstances are against it, there might be room for doubt as to how he was baptized. But the evidence in Paul's case is altogether opposed to immersion. He had been lying upon a couch for three days without eating or drinking. His system was reduced to a state of great weakness through lack of food and most intense mental agony; and it was not until after he had taken refreshments he was strengthened and capable of exertion. These circumstances are unfavorable to the supposition that he went out to be immersed. But the positive evidence against immersion is very strong, for we are told that he "*arose and was baptized.*" The language of the text indicates that he received baptism *immediately* on arising from the couch. There is nothing to indicate that any time elapsed between his rising and his baptism—he "*arose and was baptized.*" There can scarcely be anything stronger than this against immersion. In any event, immersion is clearly not taught here.

ROBERT.—I acknowledge, Brother James, that it would be hard to prove immersion from this instance of baptism.

I have been wondering why immersion is not more clearly shown in the language of those Scriptures that relate the cases of baptism.

JAMES.—This may appear a little strange to you, Brother Robert, since you began to look the Bible right straight in the face; but to us Pedobaptists there is nothing strange about it. The sprinklings of the Old Testament elucidate the baptisms of the New. If the Scriptures of the New Testament taught immersion, I can assure you we would not be Pedobaptists, but immersers. Now, owing to a similarity of circumstances in the immediateness of baptism in the case of the Philippian jailer to that of Paul, let us examine that baptism now. Paul and Silas, you remember, had been put in jail, and the magistrates had instructed the jailer to guard them well to prevent escape. In the performance of this duty, he had put them into an inner prison, and made their feet fast in stocks. This place seems to have been a kind of prison within the prison, a place from which escape was impossible to all the arts known to man. At the midnight hour God visited these servants of his and gave them an opportunity to preach the gospel. The jail was shaken to its foundations; its doors were thrown open, and the chains fell from every prisoner. God made this the occasion and the means of convicting the jailer of his sinfulness; and he sought instruction of Paul and Silas, as to his salvation. They preached Jesus to him, and he believed their preaching and was baptized, and all his house. You will find the record of these baptisms in Acts xvi. 33.

ROBERT.—“And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.”

JAMES.—Now, what do you think of that baptism,



Brother Robert? Is there any indication of immersion there?

ROBERT.—Like all other cases that have come before us, the Bible does not say anything of immersion. Still you must admit that they may have gone out of the jail and been immersed.

JAMES.—Not so fast, Brother Robert; you must not assume too much. I, by no means, admit that they may have gone out of the jail to be immersed.

ROBERT.—I cannot see why you should not admit that they *may* have gone out of the jail to be immersed. The Bible does not say they did not.

JAMES.—I think the Bible says they did not; if not directly, at least by implication. Such procedure on the part of Paul would have been in conflict with his principles. We are told that when it was day, the magistrates sent messengers to tell the jailer to let Paul and Silas go. The message was delivered to Paul, and the jailer exhorted him to go in peace. But Paul refused to leave the jail because he was a Roman citizen, and had been beaten and incarcerated without a trial. This was a clear breach of Roman law, and he would not slink out at their command, and thus give a legal coloring to their conduct and a tinge of guilt to his own. If he was to be set at liberty, those who put him in must come and take him out. There is a degree of manhood and sterling principle about this, that appeals strongly to our sense of right and honor and manliness. But if it could be shown that this man who just displayed such a spirit of manhood and self-assertiveness, had actually gone out of the jail at twelve or one o'clock at night to immerse the jailer and his house, without the knowledge and against the express orders of the magistrates, would not our admiration of his character experience a miserable collapse? I, for one,

am not willing, on such slight evidence as the supposition of others, to place Paul in such a comprising attitude.

ROBERT.—Your argument against the supposition that Paul went out of the jail to baptize is a strong one, and I, with you, will not cast the least reflection on his character. But, you know, he may have immersed in a pond in the jail.

JAMES.—True, he might have done that. There might have been a pond in the jail, where the prisoners could enjoy the luxury of a bath; but if they had such a thing, with the necessary aqueducts for letting the water in and out, they were far in advance of our twentieth century civilization. If the Romans, in the early part, and previous to, the first century had ponds or pools in their jails, in which their prisoners could enjoy the luxury of a bath, they were far in advance of the United States in their sanitary arrangements, with all our boasted progress in civilization. In this, our jails and penitentiaries are just nineteen hundred years behind Pagan Rome. Still, this might be true, however uncomplimentary to our claims to progress. All I have to say is, that the probabilities in favor of it are very slender, and that such a supposition is in the face of historical facts and the proverbial cruelty of the Romans. In the case of the baptism of the jailer and his house, the fabric of immersion rests upon a very insecure foundation, and will scarcely stand under critical investigation. But, apart from all this, you notice that there is nothing in the language of the Scripture which speaks of these baptisms that conveys the least idea of immersion. The only other baptism mentioned in the Acts to which we need give attention, is that of Cornelius and his house and kinsmen and near friends. It is recorded in x. 47, 48. Please read.

ROBERT.—“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.”

JAMES.—What is your opinion of these baptisms, Brother Robert? Does the language here indicate immersion?

ROBERT.—I cannot say that it does, Brother James. Indeed, on the contrary, it would appear that, instead of the subject being applied to the water, the water was applied to the subject. In immersion, the water is not handled, but the subject. The expression of Peter—“Can any man forbid water,” seems to teach that the water was applied to the subject, and not the subject to the water. This would not be immersion.

JAMES.—I am glad you see the point, Brother Robert. It seems a small thing, and yet it effectually closes the door against immersion. Peter evidently connects the baptism with water with the baptism of the Holy Ghost; and as the Holy Ghost fell upon, or was poured upon the parties, in order to any resemblance between the baptisms, the water must fall upon, or be poured upon those to be baptized. We are told in the 45th verse that “on the Gentiles also was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Ghost;” and then, in the 47th verse, Peter asks the question, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?” The very form of the question indicates the mode of application—“Can any man forbid water?” “God,” he would say, “has not withheld His Holy Spirit from these Gentiles—they have been made members of his family by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, as well as we; now, can any man forbid the application of water to them by which they become members of Christ’s

Church on earth?" And no one objects, he orders the water of baptism to be applied to them. How? Of course, in such a way as to symbolize the baptism of the Holy Ghost—by pouring or sprinkling or falling upon. No other way could represent the baptism of the Holy Ghost. So that, instead of any semblance of immersion in this case, pouring or sprinkling is clearly deduceable.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I think your reasoning is without a flaw. And whether immersion is a baptism or not, no one can get around the fact that Cornelius and those with him, were baptized by pouring or sprinkling.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, you display a nobleness of mind in this instance, that distinguishes you from all others of your persuasion. I have met but few immersers, I may say not any, who were willing to listen patiently to an argument from a Pedobaptist. And if circumstances forced a hearing on them, they closed their minds against conviction; or if convinced, they turned away in anger. And of them it could truly be said: "the last state of that man is worse than the first." The next mention of baptism worthy our attention is that in Romans vi. 4. Please read it, brother, and tell me what you think of it.

ROBERT.—"Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Brother James, I am almost afraid to express myself on this baptism. You see, the Apostle very clearly states that we are *buried* by baptism; and you know we cannot be buried by sprinkling or pouring. This must be immersion. All our preachers refer to this when speaking about baptism, and I have noticed they refer to it very often. I have never really given this portion of the Word very much thought.



The mere mention of *burial* by *baptism* has heretofore satisfied me that *immersion* was what was meant.

JAMES.—Just so, Brother Robert, and yet there is one little word in that expression of the Apostle Paul that upsets your whole theory. There is a word of *two* letters in there that just plays havoc with immersion. You will notice that it is not *IN* baptism we are buried with Christ, but *BY* baptism, or through baptism, or by means of baptism. Do you get the idea? The *baptism* is *not* the *burial*, nor is the *burial* the *baptism*; but it is *through*, or *by* the baptism we are buried with Christ “into death.” What a transformation that little word “by” works on the picture in the imagination of you immersers. I have noticed that immersers lay great stress on the baptism mentioned here; and I must say it is worthy of all the stress that can be laid upon it. The figure is very strong and shows the importance of the doctrine involved. You will notice that the baptism mentioned here issues in a *death* of some kind—“we are buried with him,” that is with Christ; “we are buried with him by baptism *into death*.” Do you catch the force of the expression? It is not buried with him in his burial in the tomb, or anything resembling that. But it is a burial *into death*, a death in which we, in some way, are participants, and which, in some way, has relation to Christ’s death upon the cross. The Apostle had just taught the great doctrine of justification by faith, and in this chapter is meeting the most common and most plausible objection that could be raised against it. The objection to the doctrine of justification by faith alone is—if a man is saved by grace, and justified by faith alone, the greater sinner he is and the longer he continues to sin, there is the greater exhibition of grace in his salvation; and hence it is concluded that this doctrine which the Apostle teaches is wrong, because it

would offer an inducement for men to continue in sin, that grace might abound. Now, the Apostle meets this objection to his doctrine in this 6th chapter of Romans. In the beginning of it he presents the objection, "What inference," says he, "shall we draw from this doctrine of justification through faith in the righteousness of Christ?" "Shall we infer that a man continue in sin? God forbid"! Far from this. "Did not Christ die for sin, and thus put an end to it?" And as we, by baptism are *in* Christ, so, in the eye of the law, we died with him on the cross, and, "being dead with him unto sin, we should rise with him to newness of life," or to a new life, a life of holiness. "It would be absurd to think that one who is dead unto sin should continue to live in it." This is the argument of the Apostle, and you perceive it is not only logical, but running over with good, sound sense. Being one with Christ in his death, we are, therefore, united to him, and our sins are put away out of sight, or buried through his death. But it is this baptism that makes us one with Christ, and it can, therefore, be none other than the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It is only through or "by" this baptism we can partake of the benefits of Christ's death, and only through it are we united to Christ and regarded as having died with him on the cross. The words "*into death*" are connected with the baptism, and are not to be separated from it. It is by a baptism *into death* we are united to Christ, as we are informed in the 3rd verse. We are said to be buried in Christ, that is, we are hid in him and effectually united with him in his death. The same idea is expressed in the 5th verse by saying "we are planted together in the likeness of his death," and in the 8th verse, by saying "we are dead with him." So you see, your burial form of baptism—your immersion—finds no resting-place in this 4th verse

of the 6th chapter of Romans. The baptism there spoken of is an efficient agent in bringing about the death as to sin. As no water baptism in any form can produce this effect, it is evident the Holy Spirit is not speaking of water baptism at all. Now, we will take up another portion of Scripture which speaks of baptism and burial, and try to find out what it teaches. I have reference to the language of this same Apostle in his letter to the Colossians ii. 12. Please read, Brother Robert.

ROBERT.—“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

JAMES.—This language bears a close resemblance to that in Romans. This, we might expect, when the same person is writing to different parties on the same subject. We have just seen that to be “buried by baptism into death” does not teach any *mode* of baptism with water. It is expressly stated that those who are “buried with him by baptism into death,” are “baptized into Jesus Christ;” that they “walk in newness of life,” “have their old man crucified;” “do not serve sin;” are dead unto sin;” have “obeyed from the heart;” are “made free from sin;” are the “servants of righteousness;” are “become servants of God;” are risen with him “through the faith of the operation of God;” are “quickened together with him;” and have “their trespasses forgiven.” The persons thus described must be true Christians. No external application of water in *any mode*, or by any *person*, could possibly remove from any sinner his carnal mind, “which is enmity against God,” and produce in him that spiritual condition which is here described. As no baptism but that of the Holy Ghost can produce this new and spiritual walk, whenever this “newness of life” is produced, baptism with the Holy Ghost, or regeneration, has taken

place. But this holy walk results from "being baptized into Christ's death;" therefore this baptism must be that of the Holy Ghost, and not water baptism; for water baptism does not produce nor is it always accompanied with, this new life. The baptism, therefore, mentioned in these Scriptures, being the baptism of the Holy Ghost, does not teach nor allude to immersion, nor to water baptism in any form. Notice the language of Scripture—Christians, it is said "*are risen* with Christ, through the faith of the operation of God;" not they *shall rise*. It is the *past* tense, and not the present or future—they *ARE* risen. This rising is not the act of coming out of the grave, either watery or otherwise; nor is it the resurrection of the just, when God shall call the bodies of his people from the dust. Ye *are risen* is the language, and not ye *shall rise*. This rising, then, which is *by* faith, and which has already taken place in the case of every true Christian, must be a rising from that state in which he was dead in sin. But rising from a state of death in sin, is simply to be delivered from its power by the regenerating grace of God's Spirit; and to deliver the soul from the power of sin, and remove its guilt, cannot be alluded to, nor represented by, taking the body from under the water in immersion. Christ's sufferings and death upon the cross were called a baptism; through this baptism he made an end of sin, and believers are represented as being with him on the cross, and dying with him there, and putting off there the old body of sin. Through this baptism on the cross sin is buried, or put out of sight. This was the object of Christ's death—that sin might be destroyed, and put out of sight. And so by the operations of the Holy Spirit upon the human soul, which is called the "circumcision made without hands," men are brought into union with Christ, or bap-



tized into him, and represented as being with him on the cross and leaving there, through that baptism, the old carnal nature, get a new spiritual nature through the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and are raised to newness of life "through the faith of the operation of God." Hence Christians are spoken of as being in Christ, and through the death of Christ, and their death as being in him, their sins are buried or put out of sight. Previous to this they were dead in sin, and the uncircumcision of the flesh; but now they are quickened together with him, having all their trespasses forgiven. Hence, you perceive, that the baptism mentioned in Romans and Colossians has no reference to water baptism at all; but as the text and context clearly show, has direct reference to that operation of the Holy Spirit, or baptism of the Holy Ghost, through which we are united to Christ in our effectual calling.

ROBERT.—Brother James, you have given me the best explanation of the Scriptures that mention baptism in Romans and Colossians I have ever heard. Our ministers do no more than refer to these passages as teaching immersion, or buried by baptism. I must say that, from what you have said, to confound the baptism spoken of in Romans and Colossians with water baptism, robs the Scriptures of their true meaning and purpose, and deprives the Christian of that uplift which the Holy Ghost intended he should receive.

JAMES.—Yes, Brother Robert, immersers rob these precious statements of the Holy Spirit, in reference to the union of the Christian with his blessed Saviour, of their uplifting power, and cheats the believer of the benefits of the precious doctrine involved. But let us turn our attention now to the baptism of the children of Israel in their passage through the Red Sea. 1st Cor. x. 2: "And

were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” What do you make of that baptism, Brother Robert? Do you think there was an immersion there?

ROBERT.—Well no, Brother James, not in the sense in which we use the word. Immersion means plunging under the water, and I do not think the Israelites were put *under* the sea, or under the cloud.

JAMES.—No, Brother Robert, they were not. We are distinctly told “that the waters of the sea divided, and stood as a wall upon the right hand and upon the left, and the people went through on dry land.” The cloud settled upon them from above, and there was nothing in the transaction to resemble an immersion. If this teaches anything as to *mode* of baptism, it certainly teaches pouring, or coming upon—the cloud came upon the people from above, or overshadowed them. But with this case, and some others I might mention, before your mind, what are you going to do with the Baptist statement, that “*nothing* is baptism *but immersion*; immersion *alone* is baptism?” Paul calls this a baptism, and yet it is plain that the Israelites were not immersed.

ROBERT.—In the face of this case that statement of the Baptists will not stand, Brother James. I feel you are shattering our foundations at every point.

JAMES.—Well, Brother Robert, let that pass, and let us continue. We have nearly exhausted the portions of Scripture that mention baptism. That in Gal. iii. 27, has reference to that baptism which brings all who experience it into Christ. This, we are taught, is the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Please read it and tell me what you think of it.

ROBERT.—“As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” This baptism is, evidently, as you say, the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

JAMES.—If it means water baptism, then men are brought into Christ by water baptism. But we know this is not so; for if men are brought into Christ by water baptism, then all who have been baptized would be in Christ, or Christians. But this is contrary to the Bible and experience. The only other Scripture to which we need give attention is 1st Peter iii. 21. Please read.

ROBERT.—“The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

JAMES.—The Apostle is not talking about water baptism here, you notice, but about the baptism that saves, which is the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It is not a baptism that represents the putting away of the filth of the flesh—such as John’s baptism—but a baptism that gives the answer of a good conscience toward God. It is something that saves, and he makes the Ark a figure of it. Speaking of the people who lived in the days of Noah, he says that—“the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead preached to the people in the days of Noah; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth now save us.” It is the baptism by which we are saved from God’s wrath he is speaking about, and he makes the Ark a figure of it. This is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and not water baptism, as we all know. You see, then, there is no immersion here. Now, Brother Robert, we have had before us every passage in the New Testament where baptism is mentioned, in the way of an original statement. There are other places where the word baptism is used, but they are only

repetitions of the incidents we have investigated. Now, I ask you as an honest man and a Christian, have we seen *even one instance* of baptism where the Scriptures teach immersion, or where immersion could be logically deduced as the *mode* of Christian baptism?

ROBERT.—Brother James, I am greatly astonished at the result of our candid and careful examination of the Scriptures on the subject of baptism. I confess that very early in our study, my convictions as to immersion being Christian baptism were seriously shaken. The many places where water baptism was coupled with the baptism of the Holy Ghost gave rise to two ideas in my mind. First, that the doctrine that baptism represented the burial and resurrection of Christ must be given up; and, second, that the yielding of this point would very unfavorably affect the whole doctrine of immersion; for there is nothing else that immersion can represent—and baptism must, in the nature of the case, represent something.

JAMES.—Brother Robert, such ideas would naturally present themselves to an ingenuous mind. Even a casual view of the Scriptures would soon dissipate the idea that Christian baptism was intended to represent the burial and resurrection of Christ. Along with this, there is the idea of the difficulties that often arise in connection with immersion—such as the immersing of persons in delicate health, in the winter season, or the immersing of one who might make a profession of faith on a sick bed, or the immersing of persons in the frigid zone, or of persons professing faith where water is not found in such quantities as immersion demands. All these circumstances and others not mentioned, make immersion incompatible with the simplicity of the worship of God as unfolded to us in the gospel, and brings it into strong contrast with



the simplicity of the other sacrament of the church—the Lord's Supper.

ROBERT.—Brother James, I had never thought of the difficulties that might lie in the way of the observance of the sacrament of baptism in many cases. There certainly might be circumstances in a case where baptism by immersion would be utterly impracticable, and it would not be like God to command us to observe a sacrament where the circumstances made the observance of it impossible. There is no doubt but that baptism by sprinkling or pouring meets the demands in all conceivable cases with greater readiness than immersion, and is more in conformity with the simplicity of the gospel.

JAMES.—Let us now review the whole ground of our investigations, and sum up our discoveries and bring them before our mind in concrete form. We have had before us several times every instance of baptism mentioned in the New Testament. We have seen that baptism is always mentioned in connection with the work of the Holy Spirit, and that in such a way as to teach that water baptism is a sign or symbol of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. We have seen that there is not *one* instance where immersion is either taught or logically deducible. We have seen that immersion was physically impossible on the day of Pentecost. We have seen, in fact, that the New Testament knows nothing of immersion as an ordinance in the Christian Church. We have seen that Christ did not institute baptism as an ordinance until after his crucifixion and resurrection; and from the nature of his command to his disciples just before his ascension, it is evident that the Christian Church, as such, was not set up until the day of Pentecost. On that day is brought to our mind most clearly the unity of interest of the three Persons in the Godhead in the salvation of men, and the

part each plays, so to speak, in the great work of human redemption. With the New Testament in our hand, we can read the Old under clearer light, and see here and there the glorious Trinity. But without the New Testament no definite idea of the distinction of Persons would present itself; that is, in such a way as that each had his peculiar work to perform in our redemption. The obscurity of the Old Testament on this great and fundamental doctrine is illustrated by the language of John's disciples when they said to Paul: "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Whatever may have been the nature and the extent of the operations of God upon the disciples of our Lord, previous to the day of Pentecost, it is very evident there was something lacking in them; there was something they needed to know, and something they could only learn through the revelation of the third Person of the adorable Trinity. They had listened to the instruction of Jesus for some years; they had witnessed the divine power in numberless instances; they had believed on him and had received the Holy Spirit in some measure, for he had breathed him upon them. But there was still something lacking, and which they could only obtain from the Holy Ghost as a distinct Person, and in his particular and peculiar operations as a distinct agent in the application of the salvation purchased by the Lord Jesus Christ. And as baptism was to be administered in the name of the Trinity, *Christian* baptism could not have been administered previous to the day of Pentecost, as only on that day did the Holy Ghost display himself as a distinct Person, and as a distinct, active agent in the work of redemption. On the day of Pentecost the Church made its last grand step in the way of development—on that day it threw off its old garments of types and shadows

and priestly intercessions, and stood forth in all the brilliancy of its glorified Head. With the cross in its hand and the Holy Spirit in its heart, it proclaimed the unity of the Trinity, the unity of the human family, the power of the blood of Christ, and salvation to all without distinction who believe in the Lamb of God. The day of Pentecost marked an epoch in the history of the Church of the redeemed. All the baptisms that preceded it, however numerous, or whatever may have been the intention in them, or whatever benefits they may have conferred, or whatever the *mode* of their administration, were not Christian baptisms; and therefore afford no argument in the discussion of Christian baptism, either as to form or legal effect. It is foolish, then, to admonish us to follow Christ in baptism in the sense in which it is usually done; and those who so admonish us show clearly that they misapprehend the great mission of John the Baptist—the character of his preaching and the object of his baptism. Besides all this, such an exhortation is a flat contradiction by these same parties as to the time of the setting up of the Church. They teach, and hold tenaciously to the doctrine, that the Church was not set up until the day of Pentecost; and this they must do to be consistent with their other doctrine that “infants have no right to church membership.” From all this it follows that Christian baptism, as an ordinance in the Church, could not have been practiced before the Church was set up, nor before baptism was instituted; otherwise we would have a thing existing before it began to exist. It must be yielded, then, either that the Church existed before John the Baptist came, or that John set it up, or that John’s baptism and all others that preceded the day of Pentecost, were not Christian baptisms. But if the Christian dispensation, or the Church under it, is what

is meant by the "kingdom of heaven," then it did not exist before John, nor did John set it up, nor did Jesus and his disciples set it up, for they all preached it as "at hand;" and certainly a thing that is only "at hand" has not yet come. Hence, it follows again that John's baptism was not Christian baptism; neither were any baptisms administered by the disciples of our Lord previous to his resurrection, and previous to its institution, Christian baptisms, in the sense in which the term is now used. So that when we are admonished to follow Christ in baptism, we are admonished to follow him in a thing that is not Christian baptism, a thing that is not what it is represented to be; for Christ's baptism was not Christian baptism, because it was administered before Christian baptism was instituted, and before the Christian Church was set up. If the admonition was less indefinite, if it was made more specific, if we were told to submit to the *mode* of Christ's baptism, without any reference whatever to the character of that baptism, and what was involved in it, we might willingly listen to the exhortation, and retort with great truth, that sprinklers or pourers are those, and those alone, who follow Christ in baptism. If, in the absence of positive statement, inferences from Scripture are permissible, the clearest inference is that John baptized by sprinkling. The baptism of Christ had no meaning if administered in any other way. Christ demanded baptism on the ground that he must comply with law, and *his* compliance was not enough in the case. John must also comply with law—"thus it becometh *us* to fulfill all righteousness;" and there was no law applicable to the case but the law relating to the consecration of the priests; and this law demanded the application of water by sprinkling.

The object in Christ's baptism certainly could not have



been the same as that of the baptism of the multitude. They were baptized unto *repentance*, but surely it cannot be said that Christ was baptized unto repentance. But, while the *object* in view differed, there is nothing in the record to indicate that there was a difference in the *mode*; it is very evident that the *mode* was the same in both cases. This is still further evident from the fact that the outward sign of the legal purification of the people was applied in the same way as in the consecration of the priest, viz.: by sprinkling. Hence, from the evidence of both the Old and New Testaments, it is clear that John baptized by sprinkling. The discussion between John's disciples and the Jews about purifying, still further confirms this, for this discussion arose in connection with his baptism.

We have seen, from the language of Christ, when he gave the command to baptize, that he specified no *mode*; nor is there anything in the Acts or the Epistles to indicate that a *mode* differing from John's was practiced by the Apostles; and, hence, we take it that John's *mode* was carried into the Christian Church. While John's baptism was not Christian baptism, it was recognized as a baptism, and the intention of Christ was, evidently, that this *mode* should continue; it being the best to symbolize the baptism of the Holy Ghost—the thing baptism was intended to represent.

That baptism with water was intended to represent the baptism of the Holy Ghost is evident from the twenty-one places of the New Testament where they are mentioned together; especially is this clearly shown in the language of Christ to his disciples just before his ascension, when he said: "John truly baptized *with* water, but ye shall be baptized *with* the Holy Ghost, not many days hence."

In our study of the Scriptures we *did not find one* place where the burial and resurrection of Christ is spoken of as a baptism; nor did we find *one* place where baptism with water is brought into any kind of relation to his burial and resurrection; there is not one passage in the New Testament that would lead to the inference that Christian baptism was, in any sense, meant to represent the burial and resurrection; nor is there one passage that would lead to the inference that any Apostle at any time immersed any person.

It is very evident from the Scriptures that baptism was the rite by which people were admitted into the Church in the days of the Apostles. In the second chapter of the Acts we are told that "the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." This addition was to the number of disciples by baptism—"they were added unto *them*." Now, this being so, is it not reasonable to suppose that *some* kind of a relation existed—some resemblance existed—between this baptism and that baptism of the Holy Ghost by which they were made members of Christ's spiritual kingdom, or by which they were regenerated and made children of God? It seems to me, even in the absence of Scripture testimony, that what unites us to Christ's visible kingdom—the Church—should bear some kind of relation and resemblance to that which unites us to Christ himself. But, according to immersion doctrine, no such relation does exist, for there can be no possible relation between the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the burial and resurrection of Christ. All must admit that baptism was administered only after a profession of faith was made—where those baptized were able to make a profession—or after there was an assurance of the work of God's Holy Spirit; and if baptism was suspended upon this profes-

sion, the procedure logically connects water baptism with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, for this latter baptism was the ground of their profession of faith. To shut our eyes against this is to shut our eyes against a fact that stares us in the face wherever we meet a baptism. It was when Peter and the others witnessed the work of the Spirit upon Cornelius and the others assembled with him, that the question was put—"can any man forbid water." It was after the Lord "opened the heart" of Lydia that she and her house were baptized. It was after the jailer made a profession that he and his house were baptized. It was after the eunuch professed that "Jesus is the Son of God," that he was baptized, and so on all through the series.

Now, he who does not see the relation between water baptism as practiced by the Apostles, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, must shut his eyes to the facts of Scripture. And what does all this mean? It just means, if it means anything, that water baptism was not only a sign or seal of the faith which they had, but was a symbol of that baptism of the Holy Ghost, which united them to Christ, and upon which their profession of faith was grounded. This is so clear that he may read who runs, and it proves that immersion is not Christian baptism at all, because immersion represents something that has nothing to do with uniting us to Christ, and is in *no* way connected with our regeneration, which is the ground of our profession of faith. You must remember, my dear Brother Robert, that our regeneration is no where in Scripture predicated upon the burial and resurrection of Christ; it is predicated upon the work of Christ as our Redeemer, and is the act of the Holy Spirit in applying to us the redemption purchased by Christ.

Our justification is predicated upon the resurrection of

Christ, and is the sovereign act of God; but neither the one nor the other depends in any way, even in the remotest degree, on the burial of Christ. The burial of Christ performs no part in the great plan of human redemption, either in its execution or application. However wicked the act of crucifixion, it had more important interests centered in it than the burial. The crucifixion was the act of wicked men, and yet if anything that men did to Christ deserves a memorial in the way of a Church ordinance, the crucifixion deserves it, for many and eternal human interests centered in it. But nothing depended upon the *burial* of *Christ*, and it accomplished nothing except the fulfilment of prophecy. Of course, I do not mean to cast contempt upon it—it was a kind act, and a commendable act, and deserves our approbation, and all good men approve it. But, with all this, we must not attach undue importance to it, and teach that Christ instituted an ordinance in his Church to commemorate it. The burial of Christ affected neither the Son of God nor man, and there is not an instance in the whole Word of God that shows that he, at any time, instituted a religious ordinance to commemorate an act of men. Such a thing would be contrary to the whole polity of the Bible. There is not, and never has been an ordinance in the Church that does not direct the mind to God. The object of all ordinances in religion is to direct the mind to an effective agent in salvation, and to be a means of grace to the worshipper. But an ordinance instituted to commemorate a thing that had nothing to do with salvation could never become a means of grace; for if the mind is turned to that, it must necessarily be turned away from the only source of grace. The burial of Christ was the act of men, and just so soon as the mind is brought to contemplate an act of men will the spiritual faculties cease



to operate, and one will be injured to that extent. Where there is no spiritual growth, there is injury, and there can be no spiritual growth in contemplating an act of men; for just so soon as we think of man's work will the mind be disunited from God and spiritual things.

Immersion, then, is in the face of all Scripture and reason, for it commemorates and symbolizes an act of men, and cannot, therefore, be a means of grace. Immersion ignores the work of God's Holy Spirit, and excludes any religious ordinance to represent it. Immersion robs Christian baptism of its true meaning, and of all spirituality, and teaches a doctrine repugnant to the whole Word of God; because it teaches that the burial of Christ, which was the act of men, was a necessary factor in the plan of salvation. That this is true, may be easily perceived. Immersion, as baptism, embraces two acts—putting *under* the water and taking *out of* the water. Now, the *putting under* the water is the main thing in the transaction, for the taking *out of* the water depends upon that. If the putting under the water represents the burial of Christ, the *taking out of* the water must represent his resurrection; and as the *taking out* is dependent upon the *putting into* the water, logically the resurrection (which is represented by the taking out) was dependent upon the burial, which is represented by the putting into the water. Hence, according to the Baptist doctrine and practice of immersion, if Christ had not been buried, he would not have been resurrected. Now, if resurrection is dependent upon burial, and immersion says it is, for you certainly cannot take one out of the water until he is in it, then those of the human family who have not been buried—and there are millions of them—will not be resurrected. I have no doubt, Brother Robert, but you see the absurdity of such a doctrine as that.

Now, my brother, we have dispassionately and pretty thoroughly examined the Scriptures on the subject of baptism, and the result clearly is, that baptism was intended to represent or symbolize the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and to this end the *mode* of its administration must be like the *mode* of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost baptizes by "coming upon," "falling on," or "being poured upon;" and hence in Christian baptism, the water must be "poured upon," or "fall upon" the subject. We have not found a passage of Scripture to indicate anything contrary to this, nor anything that would lead to the idea of an immersion. The baptisms on the day of Pentecost preclude all idea of immersion. According to the Scriptures then, the conclusion of the whole matter is, that in order to Christian baptism, the water must be poured or sprinkled upon the subject in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, according to the practice of the Apostles. And, hence, anything else than this is not Christian baptism.

ROBERT.—Brother James, it was I who suggested the study of the Scriptures on the subject of baptism, and I was anxious for this, because I believed that immersion was so clearly taught there, I would have no trouble in convincing you of the truth of the Baptist doctrine. I believed you would accept of immersion as soon as you perceived it to be scriptural, and I felt fully assured that the Scriptures clearly taught it. But I see clearly now that immersion has no Scripture ground to rest upon. I think it very unfortunate that Baptists have taught that baptism represents the burial and resurrection of Christ, because such doctrine involves absurdities, and runs counter to other doctrines of their system of theology. While I had never thought about it until you brought the matter to my notice, it is very evident that

Baptists themselves connect water baptism with the work of the Holy Spirit, for they will not immerse until a profession of faith is made; and a profession of faith, as you have frequently remarked, is grounded upon the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. This naturally connects water baptism with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost cannot be represented by immersion. I see that, at this point, Baptist doctrine and practice cross each other; they do not agree. Then, again, it is plain that the Baptist doctrine that the Greek word for baptism means *immersion* and nothing else, cannot be true, for the Bible does not show that any baptism recorded there was by immersion. It is very possible that the Greeks gave the name *baptism* to an *immersion*, but, at the same time, it is evident that the Apostles gave the name baptism to sprinkling or pouring. And as it has been logically and scripturally shown that sprinkling or pouring was the *mode* of Bible baptism, immersion, although a baptism, is not scriptural or Christian baptism. I believe I am better prepared now to defend sprinkling or pouring as Christian baptism, than I ever was to defend immersion. The fact is, I now see that I never really knew anything about baptism, except what our preachers hammered into my head about being "buried with him in baptism," and going *down* "*into the water*," and coming up "out of the water." As to reading the Scriptures about baptism, and reasoning upon them as you have done, I never heard one of our preachers do it. They *say* often enough that nothing is Christian baptism but immersion, but they never undertake to prove it, and thus they put their own people to a disadvantage.

I am thoroughly convinced that immersion is not Bible or Christian baptism, and as I like your doctrines and

believe your Church follows the New Testament model in its government, I intend, on next Lord's day, to make application for membership, and to receive Christian baptism.

JAMES.—Very well, Brother Robert, I believe you to be conscientious in this, and will gladly give you the right hand of Christian fellowship. We have finished our labors on the doctrine of baptism, and I believe we have both been greatly benefitted by our study of the Word of God.







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